

THE HARMONS

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THE HARMONS

A STORY OF JEWISH HOME LIFE

BY

ADDIE RICHMAN ALTMAN



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To C. H. and C. W.

*in appreciation of their rare friendship
and encouragement, this book is affection-
ately dedicated.*

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THE HARMONS

I

PREJUDICE

It was Friday evening. The lights shone brightly through the windows of a handsome residence in the best part of New York City. It was the home of David Harmon, a capitalist, who for many years had attended to no business except that connected with his charitable and philanthropic enterprises. In the dining room, a massive, eight-armed bronze electrolier shed its rays upon a table which was covered with an expensive lace cloth, and was prepared for the evening meal. The cut glass, the highly polished silver and the rare porcelain sparkled in reflected light. At the upper end of the table, the Sabbath candles burned in heavily embossed silver candlesticks, an heirloom in the family for uncounted centuries.

Mrs. Harmon and her children were waiting to welcome the husband and father upon his entrance, and this will be an opportune time to introduce them to the reader. Mrs. Harmon was considered a very handsome woman. A fine figure and a youthful face,

framed in hair that was almost snow-white, gave her a most distinguished appearance. Ruth, the elder daughter, was in her twentieth year. She was tall, slim and graceful. Masses of dark hair wound simply around her head set off her regular features, and her sparkling black eyes and pearly teeth added to her good looks.

Elsa, the younger daughter, was fifteen. She had a beautiful complexion, and her fair hair and blue eyes gave no indication of her Jewish ancestry. She was almost as tall as Ruth, and more dignified than is customary in a girl of her age. She had a fine mind, was an earnest student and an excellent pianist. The only son, Philip, was seventeen. His thoughts were concentrated on study, the more so as he was qualifying to be admitted to the Johns Hopkins University.

As the clock chimed forth six bell-like tones, the portières parted and Mr. Harmon entered. His wife stepped quickly forward to meet him. Lovingly they exchanged the Sabbath greeting while the light of happiness shone in each face. One after the other, the children welcomed their father with the ancient greeting: "Good Schabbos, father," and a kiss, fervent and hearty was given by all.

With old-time courtesy, Mr. Harmon offered his arm to his wife to escort her to the table, and the young folks took their places. In low and earnest tones, Mr. Harmon asked the blessing upon the Sabbath bread, then broke it into small pieces which he placed upon the silver bread-plate. After it had been passed around and all had partaken of the bread, he

pronounced the blessing upon the wine and poured a little into each glass. The ceremony was short, but reverent.

One glance at David Harmon sufficed to convince even the casual observer that he was a man who dominated his fellow-men. He was tall and dignified, and his wavy, iron-gray hair increased the remarkable, almost leonine, proportions of his head. His straightforward, kindly eyes, his regular, classic features, bespoke the man of culture, refinement and education. He was a man of the world, ever ready to respond to the appeals of charity and philanthropy, and he was a "Big Brother" in heart and deed, to scores who needed assistance and were deserving.

He was the idol of his children. Besides being a loving, kind, and indulgent father, his sense of justice, and his unfailing sympathy and patience with them in their youthful trials, gained for him all their confidences. His word was their law and from their infancy the recognition of this fact was inculcated by the wise mother. One restriction in particular was laid upon the family and had ever been respected by them all. It was that nothing of an unpleasant nature should be discussed, or even related, during the evening meal. This meal was to be one of cheerful, harmonious conversation, each doing his or her best to bring pleasure into the family circle. Trained as they had been to this attitude from early childhood, it was a simple matter for them and was the most natural condition imaginable.

On this special Sabbath evening, when dinner was

almost concluded, Mr. and Mrs. Harmon exchanged questioning glances. Elsa had been unusually quiet of speech, but was filled with repressed excitement. Her face was flushed, trouble was written in her eyes and nervousness was apparent in her spasmodic attempts to join in the general conversation. It was so foreign to the girl's nature, that Mr. Harmon said:

"Elsa, my dear, are you ill?"

"No, father, I am as well as usual, but I am troubled about something. I am waiting as patiently as I can until after dinner to tell you all about it. Father, may we omit the singing tonight?"

"No, dear, I think not. Your mother and I look forward to this half hour from Sabbath to Sabbath. There is nothing that gives us a purer and more uplifting joy than to hear our sacred hymns sung by our children. Is your trouble so serious that you cannot defer telling it?"

Though her voice trembled, Elsa replied bravely:

"Don't let us think about it now, father dear. It will mar this pleasant hour and I will wait until later."

Quietly Ruth interposed:

"It will take but a few moments, mother, for the table to be cleared if you call Annie now, and I am sure Elsa can wait." Addressing her sister, she continued:

"Just forget it, dear, for another half hour. I am sure you can if you will."

After the maid left the room Philip brought the prayer books, gave one to each of them, and began

to read the short prayers his father had marked for the Friday evening home services. He read seriously and the responses were uttered fervently. Then Elsa went to the piano in the next room and the family followed her. She selected one of her father's favorite hymns, played the prelude and the singing began. Ordinarily, four hymns were sung, but upon the conclusion of the second, Mr. Harmon said:

"That will do for tonight, Elsa. Your self-denial deserves some consideration. Let us repair to the library where we shall listen to all you have to tell us."

With an ill-suppressed sigh of relief, Elsa left the piano, and when all were comfortably seated in the library she began:

"I really would have tried to postpone telling my unpleasant experience in school today, until Sunday, but as it concerns our religion I believe tonight the better time."

"Do you mean to say there is any prejudice in the Gregg School?" questioned her father. "When I went there a year ago to make arrangements for your admission, I distinctly told Miss Gregg I had been informed that hers was one of the most exclusive schools in the city, that I knew her pupils were daughters of the best families and that her curriculum was desirable. But I also told her there was one thing I did not know and about which she must enlighten me before I could permit you to be enrolled. I recall the exact words because they were few. I said: 'There is one more question I must ask, Miss Gregg, is there any prejudice against the Jews in your school?'

She told me there was none; that she had other Jewish girls in her school and to her personal knowledge, a question of religion had never arisen. With that assurance in mind, it is difficult for me to understand."

"It happened this way, father. In taking my place in the gymnasium, I had to pass a group of girls who were talking together and I overheard one of them say: 'Oh yes, she is clever enough and Miss Gregg calls her brilliant, but you know she is only a Jewess.' Another whispered: 'Hush, here she comes.' They probably saw by the expression on my face that I had heard their comments and were visibly embarrassed. I passed on, then changed my mind and walked back to the girls with most of whom I have been very friendly for many months.

"'Gertie,' I said: 'Why did you say that? Of course I am a Jewess but I never made a secret of my belief, nor would I. Am I objectionable because of my religion? You have given me reason to believe you cared for me and were my friend, and the other girls have been cordial, but if you can talk about me in the tone you just used, I guess your friendship is only a sham.'

"'I didn't say anything about you or your religion,' said one. Two or three of the others said 'Nor I,' when the bell rang and the gymnasium work began. At recess, I went to Miss Gregg's office and told her what had taken place. She seemed astonished, said she would investigate the case and promised there would be no recurrence of the offence. I told her that was not what I wanted, that I merely wanted

her to understand I would not remain in her school unless my parents insisted, and I knew they would not.

"'But there are more Jewesses in the school, Miss Harmon,' she said quickly.

"'That is true, Miss Gregg, yet they may be willing to remain on tolerance and I am not.'

"'I told you it would not happen again,' she said.

"'Maybe you can repress their open remarks, but you cannot control their thoughts and feelings, and I know now what they think and feel about the Jew. However, I will speak to my father tonight.'"

She crossed the room to where her father reclined in his easy chair, dropped on the floor beside him, put her arms about his neck and whispered:

"'Father, you won't insist upon my going back to that school, will you? I would be very unhappy there.'"

"'No, my child, you need not go back if it will make you unhappy and I am convinced it would. I regret unspeakably that the unfortunate 'Jew question' has touched you so early in life, and that you, little girl, have been made to feel it as you did today. It is sad, but it is uncontrovertible. It comes to us all, young or old, rich or poor, cultured or ignorant. That is the burden of the Jew; yet our love for our God, and our faith in His goodness and wisdom, will ever give the descendants of Abraham the strength needed to bear the burden patiently. As I said, you may leave Miss Gregg's and I will obtain information about other private schools.'"

"Please, father, don't do that. I've been thinking

about it all day and, honestly, I do not want to go to any private school, because if there is a feeling against the Jew in one, the same thing may apply to another. And I do not want to go to an exclusive Jewish school either. Alma Wolf goes to Mrs. Roth's school, which ranks high in many respects, but there the girls think more about dress and society than about their education. I am afraid I shall shock you, and particularly mother and Ruth, when I say I would like to go to a public school—to high school."

Elsa was right in her surmise about the shock. It was a severe one to the mother whose ideals still clung to her aristocratic ancestors, one of whom was a renowned prince in Spain after that land was conquered by the Moors. Ruth smiled at what she believed to be the passing whim of a resentful child, forgetting that Elsa was past childish outbursts. Mr. Harmon looked grave. Silence reigned until Philip made a suggestion.

"Father," he said: "we are not very happy this evening and I think it would be a fitting time for you to tell us the full particulars of your early life. We have heard only a few fragments now and then, with your promise of the complete story some day. Won't you tell us now, father?"

Before he could reply, Mrs. Harmon said in her low, sweet voice:

"If you are not too tired, dear, I wish you would tell it to the children as you told it to me so long ago. They and we are in a receptive mood tonight and your story will divert our thoughts."

"If you wish it, Rachel, I am willing." And he began:

"I must go back a long way into the past for the beginning of the tale. I can trace my lineage from the early part of the seventeenth century, and your mother's goes back much further. The story of our two families would make interesting subject matter for a historian or a novelist. Tradition and document prove the character of our antecedents. Loyalty to country and faith in our One God were our birth-right and the sufferings and martyrdom of our personal ancestors are woven as a dark thread in our history. Some day, you may read for yourselves the records which still exist and are in our possession.

"After being driven from country to country, my great-great-grand-parents wandered into Austria and located in Prague. Hounded by day, locked within the Ghetto walls by night, compelled to wear the hideous distinctive badge of the Jew, and persecuted beyond any conception of yours, my children, they clung to life, and through every vicissitude, adhered to their faith. Generations came and went, and they all lived through similar tragic experiences. When my father reached man's estate, he realized how curtailed were the opportunities of the Jew in Europe, and decided to come to America. New York afforded no attractions to him or my grandmother. They went out West where grandfather was a prominent rabbi.

"My father had a logical mind, which Elsa has inherited. He became a renowned lawyer in Cincinnati and for many years was judge of one of the

higher courts of that city. After his death, my mother and I came to New York. This city was her birthplace and she wished to spend her declining years in the home of her childhood. A legacy from her only brother enabled her to educate me according to her desires and I studied in different universities until I was twenty-four years of age. I could not decide upon any profession, and when a banker, an old friend of my mother's family, offered me a position in his bank, I accepted it with pleasure."

II

COUNTER-OPINIONS

Mr. Harmon was interrupted by the butler, who announced the call of close neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Morton. Without any ceremony they entered and Mrs. Morton, in her gushing manner, exclaimed:

"It is rather late, but I know you won't care and I told my husband I just couldn't sleep until I had seen you. He came home late and we finished dinner only a few minutes ago. We came to talk things over."

When Mrs. Morton said "we" it always caused a feeling of amusement and sometimes provoked an involuntary smile. Whoever had been in Mrs. Morton's company for half an hour knew that the "we" was a polite concession to the presence of her husband, for she gave him very little opportunity to say much. Yet Mr. Morton was a man of intelligence and education, and when his wife was not present, could make his opinions count. The Mortons were not really friends of the Harmons. They were neighbors, belonged to the same Temple, and propinquity resulted in what so often stands for friendship.

Mrs. Harmon knew "the things" she wanted to discuss. Nina Morton was a pupil in Miss Gregg's school and had naturally told her mother what had

occurred there that morning. She also knew the call would prove to be a lengthy visit, so she said:

"You know we do not mind the hour, but if you will excuse the children——"

"To be sure I will," interrupted the visitor. "I guess Elsa is pretty tired. This morning's affair was unpardonable and I told Nina so. You go to bed Elsa, sleep on the subject and forget it. That is all you can do. And as you two," directing her remarks to Ruth and Philip," have heard the pros and cons discussed all the evening, I'll excuse you also. I am sure you've talked of nothing else."

No one contradicted her, and the young people were more than pleased to escape the volubility of Mrs. Morton.

"There!" said that lady, as she took an easy chair where she could rest comfortably, "what do you think of the whole affair?"

Without awaiting a reply she continued:

"Naturally I know more about it than you, for Elsa left the gymnasium as soon as the class was dismissed. Nina remained and told me some of the girls were truly sorry and Violet Van Houten said the whole thing was uncalled-for. They all knew Elsa was a Jewess anyway and Violet said the sneer was so unnecessary. Ruth Adair said, for her part, she was glad it happened, because Elsa had more brain than they had and cared more about school than any of them and she thought it was well to show her the social distinction between them. There was quite a discussion among the girls, who gave open expression

to their thoughts, entirely regardless of the presence of the four Jewish girls who were in the gymnasium at the time."

Mrs. Harmon said: "I am sorry the question of religion came up. It has put Elsa in a very awkward position in the school and she does not want to go back."

"Not go back!" ejaculated Mrs. Morton. "Do you mean that you will let her have her way?"

"I do not know. Mr. Harmon and I have not discussed it. It is a matter far too serious and of too much consequence in Elsa's life to be cast aside lightly. As yet we have talked very little about it."

"I do not see why you take it so seriously. If it had happened to Nina, she wouldn't have cared, and I think it was all due to jealousy of Elsa's superiority, anyway."

"That may be," interposed Mr. Harmon, "but it does not alter the situation. Elsa does care and we are deeply grieved that the experience has come to her. And suppose it is what you call 'jealousy'. Do you remember that 'jealousy' instigated the persecutions, created the degradations, invented the humiliations, and added to the tortures of the Jews for centuries? Jealousy of their education, their wealth, aye, even their health, caused their sufferings in every land where they dwelt, and made the Ghetto possible."

"Yes, but that cannot affect us in America. Here we are as good as any one and they cannot harm us."

"They cannot, or do not physically, but is the mental torture nothing? However, in the present instance we will consider it deeply."

"Nina told me she heard some time ago that Miss Gregg was trying to eliminate the Jewish girls from her school," said Mrs. Morton. "I paid no attention to the rumor because I am a firm believer in assimilation. If our children do not associate with non-Jews, how on earth can assimilation take place?" She stopped, for she had caught a meaning glance from her husband. Said he:

"Did no member of your classes or none of your club-women suggest 'assimilation' could result only from amalgamation and that it must be co-operative? If assimilation is to come from our side only, we all might as well be converted at once. I agree with Zangwill to this extent, that America is a 'melting-pot', but it is a national or political melting-pot. In the course of time, every foreigner of today will be an American. The indications that America will be a religious melting-pot are very few, and to my way of thinking, if it should become that, it will be the melting-pot of the Jews. What do you think about it, Harmon?"

"Some day," said his host, "there may be a universal melting, but to me it looks very Utopian. If we Jews had the courage of our convictions, if we had the loyalty to the faith that is our legacy from our ancestors, if we observed and respected our religion, we would be more respected. Then perhaps the non-Jewish world would not look for every concession to the melting pot from us alone.

"Don't you think the example of Zangwill himself is an unfortunate one for us in the eyes of Christi-

anity? Or do you think that the mixed marriage was the underlying motif for his play? Possibly he was even then contemplating marriage with a non-Jewess.

"It is difficult to conceive of a universal religion—that is, it is difficult for me. Others may feel differently; yet I agree with you, that by amalgamation we might be placed upon a religious basis, while assimilation will draw us into a vortex which will sweep away our individuality as a people and a religion."

He was lost in profound thought for an instant, then recalled himself and said:

"We have gone far afield from the subject of our talk."

"Yes," laughed Mrs. Morton, "and these serious thoughts sometimes grow tiresome. I want to say another word in reference to Miss Gregg's school. I hope you will not withdraw Elsa. I mean to keep Nina there, for I want her to associate with those aristocratic girls."

"But would you keep her there on tolerance?" asked the wiser mother. "I am afraid I would not, nor would Elsa remain on those terms."

"And why not? I am as good as they, and I see no reason for withdrawing Nina. I think Elsa's view childish."

Adroitly changing the conversation, Mrs. Harmon said:

"Pardon me, Mrs. Morton, for having neglected to ask why Nina did not come over with you?"

With a nervous laugh which was calculated to cover

her embarrassment, but was unsuccessful, Mrs. Morton answered:

"You know the Friday evening has never had any special significance in my family. I try to get to Temple quite often, when I have no other engagement, for I do not belong to the class known as Sunday Jews. Friday evening, as you keep it, is no doubt a beautiful custom, but we have never instituted it." Then she added lamely:

"Nina and Richard have gone to a party at Melville's."

Mr. Morton took up the thread of conversation by asserting:

"I did not want them to go. Not exactly because it is Friday evening, but because I do not approve of my children's intimacy with the Melville children."

"That brings us back to the beginning of our talk," said his wife, "and it is pure narrow-mindedness. If every one felt as you do, Max, there would never be assimilation. The Melvilles are fine people and I hope their children and ours will continue this youthful friendship."

"The friendship may be harmless today, but how would you feel if Richard married out of the faith?" asked Mrs. Harmon.

Mrs. Morton, with many qualities to recommend her, belonged unmistakeably to the "Climber" class, answered: "While I should prefer my children to marry one of their own kind, something worse might happen to Richard than to marry a charming girl like Maude Melville."

Greatly to the relief of all, the entrance of the butler with some light refreshments, put an end to the conversation which was waxing too personal. Within a short time, the visitors departed, but it was too late to begin a discussion which might prove to be lengthy. With the complete understanding that had always existed between Mr. and Mrs. Harmon in reference to their religion and the training of their children, neither reverted to the subject of such vital importance to them.

The following day, after a long conversation, Elsa was called to join her parents. She came at once and exclaimed eagerly:

"You won't send me back to Miss Gregg's school, will you, father?"

"No, my dear," was the reply. "Even if everything were smoothed over, and your position relative to the other girls seemed the same as it was before you overheard their remarks, you would nevertheless become super-sensitive on the subject and would never find pleasure nor contentment there again."

"I wouldn't, father. I would never be happy there and I am so glad you see it my way."

"My daughter, your mother saw it your 'way', as you call it, and it is to her good judgment you owe our decision."

"I knew it, I knew it," cried Elsa joyously. "Mumsy always knows what to do to make us happy." She flew to her mother, giving her an impetuous hug and a resounding kiss. Then, recollecting the withdrawal from the school was not the only question at issue,

"Have you decided where I am to go to school? Please, please don't say you will send for a lot of prospectuses from academies and finishing schools and such!"

"Your English, Elsa, makes me wonder if an intermediate or grammar school would meet your requirements better than those you have mentioned."

"Because I said 'prospectuses', I suppose!" laughed the girl, all her natural gayety restored. "I know 'prospectuses' does not sound right, but you surely would have thought me ridiculous if I had said 'prospecti'. That's right in Latin, but wouldn't it sound silly in English to say you will send for a lot of 'prospecti'? Oh, mother!" and her laughter was so infectious that her parents could not refrain from joining her.

In a moment, volatile Elsa became serious and looking earnestly from her mother to her father, said:

"I want to go to high school, really and truly I do."

"But," said her mother, "do you know what that means—what it will mean to you?"

"It won't mean anything to me. Why should it? Thousands of girls go to high school who are probably just as good as I am and maybe better."

"Undoubtedly, but they have not been raised as you have. They began their education in the primary department of a public school, and continued it until they were ready for high school, which is but an advancement in their studies. The same system prevails throughout, and the conditions are parallel."

"What difference would that make where I am concerned?" asked the girl, uncomprehendingly.

"This difference, Elsa," replied her father. "You, like nearly all the girls in your position, and by that I mean most children of wealthy and cultured parents, have been shielded from the rougher side of life from infancy. Your first lessons were given by a governess, then came a select school and later Miss Gregg's. It may be an error of people, in our social position, to keep their children separated from those of other classes of society, it may savor of arrogance and old-world aristocracy, but it is a general custom and we have not deviated from it."

"But if I want to go?" persisted the girl.

"We fear the fulfillment of your desire may not be to your advantage," said her mother.

Mistaking her meaning, Elsa said:

"Oh mother, their course of study includes much more than ours at Miss Gregg's."

"I did not mean that, my dear," smiled the mother. "I was thinking of the social side. I will say this, however. I have sometimes thought it a mistake of the so-called upper classes to refuse to mingle with others of good mentality and often excellent ancestry, merely because they are not rich. Like some others, I have sometimes suspected we were doing our children harm, yet I never made any attempt to change the accepted order of things." Turning to her husband, she added:

"Do you see, dear, how readily I follow the line of least resistance?"

While Elsa may not have fully understood to what her mother referred, she caught at the vague hope that surrender was near and exclaimed:

"I know what following the line of least resistance means, and it seems to me I will be following it, if I give up my wish to go to high school. It would be ever so much easier for me if I gave up trying to coax you into giving your consent."

The parents exchanged a meaning look which Elsa was quick to catch, but before she could speak, her father said:

"Your logic is not bad, Elsa, but remember we have had no experience of our own and have had no information from others about anything connected with the public schools. We had agreed to let you go, but felt it necessary to hold this conversation with you first. We make but one condition. You must not allow your democratic ideas to 'run away' with you, and you must use your best judgment in the selection of your companions."

Kissing her father and mother, and thanking them heartily, Elsa said, as she left the room:

"Now I must tell Ruth. I hope she won't mind."

III

CHANGES

It was with some curiosity that Mr. Harmon accompanied Elsa to the high school she had selected. He had never visited any of the city schools and was not prepared to see the large number of girls that filled the corridors, the stairs and the class rooms. He was directed to the office of the principal, Doctor Hall, by a sweet and modest girl about Elsa's age, and the girl's dignity and self-possession pleased him. The clerk gave him and Elsa a friendly smile and asked them to be seated until the principal was disengaged. Ere long a bell rang and the clerk ushered them into the private office where Mr. Harmon stated his business. Dr. Hall asked for the transfer card from the previous school that Elsa had attended. The request astonished Mr. Harmon who said:

"I was not aware that a card was necessary. My daughter has attended Miss Gregg's Seminary, but she desired to make a change and selected your school."

"Under those circumstances a card is not requisite," said the principal. "It is needed only when a child changes from one public school or one high school, to another. We must keep records of all changes. It

does not apply to your daughter, who has never been a pupil in our schools. An examination is all we require now." He touched a bell and upon the reappearance of the clerk, asked her to admit Elsa and then conduct her to the room where the examination would be held. Elsa followed her hesitatingly, as she had not expected this, and Mr. Harmon said to the principal:

"If there is no further information you desire from me, I will detain you no longer. Your time is valuable and limited."

"Not many recognize that fact," said Doctor Hall with a smile. "You are observant. I require no special information, but will confess to a little curiosity as to the reason why your daughter wished to leave Miss Gregg's school. I know its high standard and its exclusive patronage." Hesitating for an instant, he continued: "Of course, if circumstances compelled——"

"Pardon the interruption, Dr. Hall, that has not been the cause of Elsa's leaving Miss Gregg's school. It was purely a personal matter with Elsa, or, more strictly speaking, a question of religion. My daughter is a staunch little Jewess and, for personal reasons, would not remain there. She implored me to bring her here."

"I truly admire the girl's spirit. Private schools are doubtless good institutions, but they are more or less narrow. In the course of time, I am confident you will be convinced of the broadening and leveling influence of the public schools, and pre-eminently of the

high schools. But how did you happen to select my school?"

"That was also Elsa's doing. She once overheard a conversation, wherein it was said that yours was not only a school of lofty standards, but one of equality as well, and, young as she is, she is seeking equality, or, as she expresses it, democracy."

"Good for her!" said Dr. Hall rising. "There is good material in that girl and I shall watch her progress with much interest. I feel sure she will find a kindred soul or two with whom she will be glad to associate. The power of selection is given to some, you know."

With a friendly hand-clasp, the men separated. Elsa passed her examinations with credit to herself, and was entered in the junior classes. Each day she came home from school in gay spirits and evident contentment. She had been there about two weeks, when, upon entering her mother's room one afternoon, she exclaimed:

"Mumsy, I have become very friendly with a girl in my class, and I hope we shall be real friends. Her ideas and mine are so similar on some subjects and at recess we have many pleasant talks. There is only one thing that troubles me. She is so shy and reserved about herself that I am not sure if she likes me."

Mrs. Harmon listened with interest. Elsa was slow in making friends, though she counted her acquaintances by the score. There must be something particularly attractive about this girl.

"Tell me something about her, Elsa, so that I may get an idea of her appearance and character."

"The trouble is I don't know much myself. All I have found out is that she is the youngest of four children, all girls, and that she lives on the East side, in the lower Thirties. Her name is Leila Netter, she is not quite fifteen years old, and she is a splendid scholar. The teachers all love her."

"That is a recommendation in itself, my dear. Is there anything else you know?"

"Nothing. But I can describe her looks. She is nearly as tall as I, and has a little more flesh. She is not specially pretty, but her hair is wonderful. It is a perfect Titian red, is wavy, and she wears it in one great heavy braid, that reaches far below her waist. She has big brown eyes and such a sweet smile—only she doesn't smile often. But Mumsy," and Elsa's voice softened: "I think her people haven't much money."

"Why do you think that, dear?"

"Because one day she said her sisters were teachers, one in West 24th Street School and the other down town, in the Russian quarter. You don't know, mother, how much I like Leila Netter."

"I hope you are not mistaken in your estimate of her, and that your wish for her friendship be fulfilled. And now, I have a bit of news for you. We received a letter today from the dean of the university, that Philip should present himself for examination."

"I am glad for his sake. He has been waiting so

impatiently for that letter and at last it has come. When is he going?"

"Within a day or two, as the examinations take place next week. You would scarcely recognize our sedate Philip in the excited boy. He would not allow James to assist him, but began to pack his trunk at once. I can't tell you how often he has run up and down stairs."

Rapid footsteps on the stairs caused them both to smile, and Philip, with hair all tousled and necktie awry, rushed into the room, exclaiming excitedly:

"Mother, I can't find the prayer-book you gave me nor your picture. I always keep them together. Do you know where they are?"

"I know where a certain boy left them when he returned from camp, and I presume they are still there, as they belong to his going-away outfit."

"Oh, are they with those things?" and away he dashed.

Elsa laughed and commented:

"I suppose he feels it a great thing to go to the university at his age, and it is, even if we don't tell him so. I hope he passes the exams."

Mrs. Harmon, who never overestimated her children's abilities, though she recognized them, said:

"He is young, I know, but he was always serious and is a hard and faithful worker, so why should he fail to pass? It is possible that he has not attained the proficiency they demand and, if that be so, he may be conditioned. He is positive he will pass."

"I am going to see if I can help him any," said Elsa and went upstairs to his room.

For some years the height of Philip's ambition was to get his education at Johns Hopkin's University in Baltimore. To be a physician, seemed to him the highest profession a man could have and he studied diligently to prepare himself. The previous year, his father wrote to the dean of the university to furnish him with a curriculum and Philip had bent all his energies to meet the requirements. His tutors were satisfied with the result of their examinations, and now he was about to go.

The next day was a busy one in the Harmon family. There was considerable shopping to do, for Philip was growing rapidly. He had always been more or less unhappy when he looked at his sisters both so tall and slim, and Elsa two years younger than he. Philip was unmistakably below the average height of a boy of his age and, being inclined to stoutness, he looked even shorter. This gave him many a *mauvaise quatre d'heure*. In the gymnasium, his chief exercises were those which had a tendency to lengthen his limbs, but, like many other lads, he was impatient of results. In the past few months, his additional height became noticeable and, as he outgrew his clothes very rapidly, it naturally necessitated shopping.

At last the preparations were completed and Philip's trunk contained all and more than he needed for the ensuing year at the university. His going away was almost a function, because it was the first time they had been separated, except possibly for a few days.

One of Mr. Harmon's principles was that when a family's interests were bound up in the interests of each individual, it would hold them in close and affectionate ties that would be indissoluble. He and his family had always lived up to that principle. The separation from Philip was to be for many months, as it had been decided he was not to come home for the Christmas holidays. Philip did not know the reason, nor did he insist upon a definite answer to his "why not?" when he saw that his father preferred not to tell him.

To the modern reader with a knowledge of the present-day attitude of boys and girls to know the "why" of everything their parents say or do, this deference of a boy of seventeen to his father's wishes may seem almost incredible. But there are still some children who are raised according to olden standards, who implicitly obey the Fifth Commandment, and the Harmon children belonged to this class.

The hour of departure had arrived. The limousine was before the door, and Philip, escorted by the whole family and followed by the farewells of the servants, entered the car. They soon reached the station and after many embraces and parting wishes, the boy, with mingled feelings of joy and sadness, boarded the train.

IV

THE NETTER FAMILY

On the east side of New York City, there is a locality where the dwellings of wealth and aristocracy were situated in the middle of the last century. Murray Hill and its vicinity still bear many traces of former grandeur and good architecture. In the progress of time, the thoroughfares around Second and Third Avenues were deserted, and gradually the property depreciated in value. As a consequence, the character of the neighborhood was altered and it became the chosen place for the poorer people; not the indigent or poverty-stricken, but the self-respecting and respected, unmoneyed, middle classes.

It is difficult to understand the position of the Netters in these surroundings, for they were intellectually far superior to their neighbors, and through breeding and ancestry, were the equal of many who were socially above them. These attributes placed them in an anomalous position. Mr. Netter had bought his home soon after his marriage, although the outlay crippled him in business. This did not mar the pleasure and satisfaction he derived from the knowledge that the house was free from any liens or incumbrances, but his wife did not share his hap-

piness. She often wished he had not felt it incumbent upon him to pay every dollar the house cost, to the detriment of his business, but he was not to be swerved from his belief that he had done right. His invariable reply, which shattered every argument she used, was:

"No, Emma, do not try to dissuade me. None of us has a lease on life, and when I am taken away, I will go with the conviction that my family will always have a home free from mortgages."

For lack of capital there soon was no business, and Mr. Netter, too old to obtain employment, endeavored to get some pupils in German and Hebrew. He was qualified to teach, inasmuch as he had a good education. He was successful in procuring many pupils, but the money he made in this uncertain way was insufficient for the needs of a family of six people. His second daughter, Dora, had graduated from the Normal College, but as she had chronic throat trouble and was not strong, her father disapproved of her being a teacher. But with the same fidelity to purpose that characterized him, she now applied for a position and received an appointment. Though her father regretted the step, he knew that an assured income of five-hundred a year, added to what he earned, would keep them in comfort.

There were four Netter girls. Fanny, the eldest, did not care to study and after a year at Normal, remained at home to assist the mother. She was not pretty, none of them could be called that, but there was much that was lovable about her. At the time

of our introduction to the family, the third daughter, Naomi, was nearly eighteen years of age. Although she, too, was plain-looking, her beautiful chestnut hair with glints of gold in it, her clear complexion and faultless teeth made her attractive. Naomi, seeing Dora's success in getting an appointment as teacher, determined to fit herself for the position. The fourth daughter was Leila, the treasure of the family. She was the girl whom Elsa Harmon wanted for a friend.

In the course of time, Mr. Netter's health failed, and ere many months passed, his death occurred. The mother was crushed and all the household duties devolved upon Fanny and Naomi. But Naomi felt she was competent to fill a different niche, and one day she remarked:

"Mother, if you are able to assist Fanny, I am going to seek employment. Except the home, all we have is Dora's five-hundred a year, and we all are convinced that is not sufficient for our needs. Moreover it is not fair to throw the entire burden on Dora's shoulders. Father's dream and our ambition have been to give our Leila the advantages we could not have. Her talent for music must be cultivated and for that she will require the best teachers. The child has a serious nature, is devoted to her books, and her violin is her life."

"That is true," said Mrs. Netter as her eyes filled with tears, and with a quivering voice. "Ah, how many conversations your dear father and I have had on this subject, and one of his saddest regrets was his inability to employ high-class teachers. Unfortunately they are high-priced, too."

"Then mother, you assuredly do not want the same regret in your heart, I know. If I can get work, will you allow me to take it?"

"Yes, dear, but what can you do? You left Normal College in your third year, after you had typhoid fever and you never went back. You have no license to teach."

"I know, but I intend to go back for the fourth year now, and I intend to do the year's work in six months. Then I will get my license and a position."

Another plan was formulating in her mind, even while she was speaking. She refrained from mentioning it until it bore fruit; but on the following day she went to the Temple where Doctor X, one of the leading rabbis of the city had his study, to interview him.

"Doctor," she said, fearless and frank because of his cordial greeting, "my name is Naomi Netter. It is imperative that I become a wage-earner——." She stopped as she noted his look of sympathy after he had glanced at her black dress. In a subdued tone, she continued:

"Doctor X, I am wearing mourning for my sainted father who left us a few weeks ago. We now have but one source of income. My sister teaches school, but she is not well and I am eager to do my share."

"And you think I can assist you in doing your 'share'? What can you do wherein I can help you?"

"I think I could teach in your Sabbath School."

"I am sorry, my dear; there is no present indication of a vacancy. Have you ever taught Sabbath School?"

"No, nor have I taught anything. But," and her voice was full of conviction, "I know for a certainty that I can teach and be successful in the class-room."

Such self-confidence in a young girl and expressed so unhesitatingly, was unusual, and his interest increased.

"What makes you so confident?"

"I cannot tell, but I feel it intensely," she replied.

"Have you any other plan besides teaching Sabbath School?"

Naomi told him and added:

"You see, while I am attending college I want to earn something and I thought of Sabbath School work. My grandfather was a rabbi and my father gave us such beautiful religious instruction that I know I can impart it to others."

"Did he give you other instruction?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" she said with animation. "He couldn't afford to employ teachers, so he devoted an hour every evening to our instruction in the Bible, in German and in Hebrew, and I love Hebrew."

The rabbi looked at her thoughtfully and almost uncomprehendingly. Here was a girl still in her 'teens, who said she "loved Hebrew"—truly a *rari avis*, who at the close of the nineteenth century, not only knew the sacred tongue, but loved it. Though his time was limited, the rabbi did not hasten her departure, but said with a whimsical smile:

"Can you translate Hebrew?"

"Yes, indeed. If I couldn't, I surely would not love it so."

Silently he took a heavy volume from the shelf, opened it at random and placed it on his desk within her reach. She watched him with interest, and said:

"Do you want me to read for you?" and, as unconcernedly as if it were a common occurrence for American girls to read Hebrew, she bent over the book and read a paragraph with fluency and expression. Then she translated it.

The rabbi was speechless with astonishment and continued to gaze at her in silence. Then he said:

"Miss Netter, would you like to teach Hebrew every Saturday?"

"Oh Doctor, do you think me capable?"

With difficulty, he repressed a smile of amusement. He covered it with a cough, and said:

"If you care to teach a class of thirty boys who have had two years training, you can come here next Saturday morning at nine o'clock and I will introduce you to them. They are taught one hour each week and the pay is twelve dollars a month."

"Doctor, how can I thank you?" stammered Naomi.

"By teaching the boys as thoroughly as you were taught, and by implanting a love of Hebrew in their young hearts," was his reply, as he escorted her to the door of his study.

"Twelve dollars a month! twelve dollars a month for one hour's teaching every Saturday morning," was the refrain that repeated itself in Naomi's brain all the way home, and the air-castles that the money would help provide for Leila's benefit, towered to the skies.

There was much joy in the Netter home when Naomi told of her "good luck," as all but Leila persisted in calling it.

"How can you call such a thing 'good luck' except that it was 'good luck' that she studied Hebrew so long? Father always said Naomi was a good scholar. If she weren't she would not have received the position, and when the doctor saw how much she knew, he wanted her to teach in his school."

"I suppose Leila is right, and she says just what father would say if he were here with us," said Mrs. Netter. "It is rather foolish for us to speak about 'good luck' in anything like this, when it was really nothing but Naomi's actual knowledge of a thing she acquired by hard study. Most of the fortunate things that come to us, are dependent on the will-power, or the efficiency, or the education of the individual when the opportunity for any advantage presents itself. The rabbi required a competent teacher, Naomi's knowledge was adequate for his needs and the combination was effected. It was simple and logical."

"What a long speech for mother to make," interposed Dora. "You are so silent all the time that I know you will feel better for allowing yourself to express your opinion. If you did it oftener it would make us happier. We try to relieve your loneliness, but when you only smile at us, your eyes full of tears, we are in doubt as to the result of our attempts."

"I recognize and appreciate what you call your attempts to make me more cheerful. For your sakes,

my good girls, and you are good girls in every respect, I try to forget. My sad memories often overwhelm me, but time and God's healing hand will help me, even as you all are helping me. And now, Leila, sing for us a little while."

V

THE MORTONS' PROBLEM

The telephone rang insistently. Elsa answered it and came into the library saying:

"Mrs. Morton wants to know if you and father will go over to her house. She said there is something of great importance about which she wants advice from both of you. She hurt her foot, otherwise they would come here."

"Tell her, dear, we will be there in a little while, and that I am sorry about her foot."

"She wants me to go over with you, so that I can help Nina with her geometry." She blushed as she added: "She said I was such a 'splendid mathematician' that I could explain the problems better than Nina's teacher."

"Say you will go with us."

When Elsa returned her mother said gravely:

"I am sorry, Elsa, that Mrs. Morton said that, for it is hardly probable that you can explain problems better than Nina's teacher. But even if you could, I cannot approve of the unfavorable criticism of a teacher to her pupils. A teacher's lot is too full of trials for any parent to thoughtlessly increase the burden."

"I think I know the trouble there, Mumsy. Nina was always a little slow in mathematics, whether it was arithmetic or algebra or geometry, and I guess Mrs. Morton doesn't know it and blames the teacher. When I was at Miss Gregg's school, I thought Miss Davis was a fine teacher."

"When you are helping Nina this evening, tell her your good opinion of Miss Davis, will you? Call to Aimee to bring our wraps, and we will go over."

The Mortons' house was more costly than that of the Harmons, even as their retinue of servants was larger, but the refined taste and individuality of Mrs. Harmon raised her own home far above that of her neighbor. The exquisite tinting of the decorations, the simple yet expensive hangings, the elegance of the furniture, the harmonious blending of the color-scheme in every detail from ceiling to floor, gave pleasure to the artist as it did to the least informed. Moreover, Mrs. Harmon never lost sight of the fact that hers was to be a home in the true sense of the word, and that her children were to occupy that home. One elegant drawing-room had been restricted for formal occasions, but all the other rooms were there for the family to enjoy.

No so with Mrs. Morton. Her decorator, one of the most expensive in the city, had been given *carte blanche* to furnish her home with whatsoever he deemed suitable, and he followed his judgment, or rather what he considered to be the taste of his customer. While no gross errors could be found, the flaws were many. Nothing was restful to the eye,

nothing was home-like. Whether the two children brought up in these surroundings were conscious of any lack is doubtful, but Mrs. Morton was thoroughly contented and gratified with it all, and Mr. Morton paid the bills and made no comments.

After the salutations were exchanged and Elsa asked to go to Nina's study, Mrs. Morton said:

"It was only after I telephoned, that I remembered that this is one of your busy days. I am a member of the 'Auxiliary' to the Orphan Asylum, too, and formerly I used to go regularly to sew there. I cannot do it now, because my clubs and classes fill my time."

"My social duties are rather exacting," said Mrs. Harmon, "but my philanthropic work is so close to my heart, that it would be a keen disappointment if anything prevented me from giving the little help I can."

"The 'little' help, did you say? Why, Mrs. Harmon, every one knows that for years you have cut most of the garments and prepared much of the sewing. Or if you didn't, you varied your occupation by sewing on the machine or inspecting the finished work. You are one of the 'pillars of the church' everywhere."

"Ah, but I cannot sew on the machine any more," said Mrs. Harmon, unheeding the closing remark. "I regret this, but I do all I can in other directions. We need good workers and you were an excellent button-hole maker. Can't I influence you to take up the work again?"

"Possibly at some future time," Mrs. Morton replied with a sigh, "at present I have other worries."

"So we judged," said Mr. Harmon, glad of the opportunity to bring up the object of the visit, "otherwise I would have persuaded my wife to remain at home. It is unusual for us to go anywhere on Wednesday evenings. When she was younger we were not so particular about it, but now——"

"But now I am paying one of the penalties of old age," laughed Mrs. Harmon, who had just celebrated her forty-second birthday. "But please tell us how we can assist you."

"It is about Richard. We are worried about him and we want to ask your advice. Today——"

"Had you not better go back a little way in your recital?" interrupted Mr. Morton. "Our friends will then understand the situation more clearly."

"I was going to tell that story afterwards," she said, flushing a little. "Perhaps though, you are right."

This public concession to her husband's opinion or judgment was unexpected. It indicated that for once she was unable, or afraid, to decide for herself.

"I hesitated about telling the story, because it is not very creditable to us, and yet I don't know how we could have helped it. When Richard was six years old, a neighbor told me he had taken a few of his little companions to a candy store and treated them to candy and peanuts. She knew he went nowhere without his nurse. It looked suspicious to her and she felt it her duty to inform me. I thanked her, though I was filled with shame and dismay. Upon questioning the child, I found it was true, and further-

more that he had obtained the money by taking pennies from my purse at various times. I explained his wickedness, whipped him and told him if it ever happened again, I would pack a trunk with all my things and go away, closing my remarks with the words: 'I cannot live with a little boy who steals; and then you will have no mother to love you.'"

"Mrs. Morton," said Mrs. Harmon gravely, "did you not realize how foolish was the threat?"

"I do now, and I did then, after I told Mr. Morton. He said the same thing, but added: 'a threat that cannot be carried out loses its effect and some day the boy will realize it.' But it was done, and while my reason told me I was wrong, my—well, call it obstinacy, if you like—prevented me from admitting it. As there was no recurrence, I forgot my fears. A year and a half later, when Richard was nearly eight years old, Mr. Morton prepared to make a business trip and asked me to go with him, as we could combine business with pleasure. His mother agreed to take the children and we went." She hesitated an instant, then addressing her husband said:

"Will you tell the other story? You know it better than I, because your mother told it to you and not to me."

"My mother," said Mr. Morton, taking up the narrative, "is as truly a spiritual, God-loving, religious woman, as she is an advocate of everything modern, even if she is no longer young. She knew the story of the pennies and disapproved of my wife's method of correction, and was curious as to the outcome. One

pleasant afternoon shortly before Christmas, when Nina was at a little kindergarten celebration, Richard asked his grandmother to take him to see the display of toys in a large department store. When they were going home she took his hand to cross Broadway, at the same time noticing that he held the other one rigidly behind his back. She immediately surmised what had happened, just as you do."

"Yes," said Mr. Harmon, "the threat was forgotten and he stole some toy."

"Exactly. Mother questioned him gently, for she has never been harsh with the children; she could not be. In terror he showed her a top, but persisted in saying the girl in the store gave it to him. Mother stopped in a doorway, told him he was not telling the truth, that he had stolen the top and must return it. In his fright he said just what she hoped he would, namely, that he was afraid to take it back because some one might see him. Then she brought in the lesson of God's seeing him, and of his breaking the commandment that tells us not to steal, etc., etc., until the child consented to return the top. She followed him and saw it replaced in the box."

"Did she punish him in any way?" asked Mrs. Harmon with deep interest, deep, because of the opportunity it gave her to give an object lesson on this subject to the class of little children in the Russian quarter, to whom she taught religion, ethics and morals.

"Yes, but in a most original way. She bought a top similar to the stolen one and attached it by a

little ribbon from the chandelier in the children's room. His joy upon seeing it and thinking it was for him, was equalled by his disappointment when mother told him it was there as a reminder of his wrong-doing; that, as it swung to and fro like a bell, it tried to say to him: 'Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not steal.' Often calling his attention to what the top was trying to say, she kept it there a month, then placed it with his other toys. It had lost its charm for him and he would not play with it, so she gave it away."

"The story is interesting in itself, but more so from a psychological standpoint," said Mr. Harmon. "I would like to ask if the lesson was a permanent one, or did the boy succumb to temptation again?"

"Now comes the strange part of the story. Richard was not quite eight years of age, and the lesson, the first he had really had about the commandments and their vast significance, made a deep impression upon him. The boy had no religious training worth mentioning. He never attended Sabbath School and there has been no religious influence whatsoever to follow that lesson given by my mother. He never heard a Bible story, for reasons which I would rather leave unmentioned."

"No," said his wife, "we will not leave them unmentioned. We are culpable: I, because of my set anti-Jewish, stupid bigotry and you, who for the sake of peace, would not insist upon the religious training every child, and above all every Jewish child, should have. Today I recognize my great mistake. I fed

the boy on myths and fables, read him stories about Roman and Grecian heroes, about Napoleon and other famous men, but—oh! I am ashamed to show you my prejudice!— never a word about anything appertaining to Judaism, deliberately omitting every story of our heroes, our famous men and our wonderful history.”

“But I cannot understand——”

“No, Mrs. Harmon, you cannot understand, nor can any one. Nor can I say what I expected to gain from my anti-Jewish attitude. While I am confessing, let me go a little further. I would not tell every one, but you know me so well, I will tell you just a little more about myself. I am beginning to recognize some of my failings. I might have had a good education, but I would not go to school after I was fifteen, preferring to have a ‘good time’. When I discovered how much you know, Mrs. Harmon, I was ashamed of my ignorance and have been attending classes over since. One day, my literature teacher gave a lesson on the ego, and I have made the application to myself. If I have gained nothing else, I have learned one thing about myself. I know, today, my ego has been paramount in my life and that same ego has blinded me to almost everything.

“I don’t know that I ever actually denied the faith into which I was born, but I was always pleased to hear that inane remark: ‘I never would have taken you for a Jewess’, with the emphasis on the ‘you’. Of course I went to Temple, spasmodically. We belong, for one must belong to something; but I fear

my children did not see much of a religious spirit in me, so how can it be expected in them?"

"Mr. Morton," interpolated his friend, "we have digressed somewhat. You said the strange part of your story was to follow."

"Yes, I did. Some time after our return, my mother told me the top episode. I need not tell you my feelings, but his mother and I kept close watch over him and his personal possessions. More than four years later, when he was about thirteen, he and I went out to walk one Sunday. He had not been told that his mother and I had heard the story, but for some reason I cannot fathom—perhaps it was a suggestion from Above—I told him we knew. He was visibly embarrassed when I continued:

"I hope the lesson Grandma gave you will last through life, and help you to keep straight. Wasn't it a splendid lesson?" Reluctantly he replied: 'It lasted a long time, more than three years, I guess, but then I did it again.' I was horrified, but, he continued cheerfully:

"I'll tell you how it happened and how I was cured, and Dad, I'm cured for keeps now."

"He told me that shortly before his mother's birthday he went to buy her little gift. He did not know what he wanted, but stopped at a counter where he saw some little pins fastened on cards. He looked at them, handled them, kept one card in his hand and left the counter, walking toward the door. Before he reached it a man took him by the arm, asked what he had done with the card of pins and told the boy to follow him. I will repeat his own words now."

"The man asked me why I took the pins and I said as quick as I could, that I took them to the door to look at them. I said: 'I want them and here's the quarter for them.' Dad, you need not worry, for I'll never steal again. You get caught too easy and I won't take any chances. Please don't tell mother. Promise me.'"

"Max!" exclaimed his wife. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"I could not, for I gave my promise to the boy." Pulling himself together, he said:

"Pardon me, friends, I had to tell the story to give you some insight into Richard's character. He may be cured of stealing, but there is something radically bad in his make-up. His associates are all non-Jews and of inferior social standing. His tastes are low, and his future looms darkly before us. He is over nineteen years old, left school at fourteen, and has had several positions, none of which he was able to keep. There has been no difficulty in obtaining a position for my son, but I am a little ashamed to ask again."

"Why again?"

"Because his firm discharged him today, as he told us when he came home this evening. That fact however, did not deter him from going out later. We rarely ask him where he goes because we know he will not tell us. It is easier for him to lie than speak the truth even when the latter might serve him better. We cannot influence the boy in any way and we have no control over him, humiliating though it be to admit

it. Will you talk to him? Harmon, will you try to open his eyes before he goes too far on the downward path?"

"I will try, but my words may have no effect." As they rose to go, he added:

"Your problem is not an easy one but I will make a strong effort to aid you. Please call Elsa."

VI

THE UNEXPECTED RETURN

Only a few words were exchanged by the Harmon's in the short distance that lay between the two homes. Elsa suddenly exclaimed:

"There is a light in the library. I guess Ruth has come home from the Settlement."

"Isn't it too early?" asked the mother.

"No, it was after ten when we rose to leave the Mortons. Sometimes Ruth is home at this hour."

As they entered their house, Ruth came from the library to greet them and said:

"I came home a little earlier than usual this evening because the lecture did not consume much time, yet it lasted too long to begin any other work." As an afterthought, she added: "Mr. Eckstrom is in the library. Would you like to come in and see him?"

"Most assuredly," said her mother. "We will be there in a few moments."

Mr. Eckstrom needs a special introduction to the reader. He was a lawyer, who, although young as time counts, had already begun to mount the ladder of fame and was favorably known to very prominent jurists for his sterling characteristics. He was a Southerner by birth, as were his parents before him,

and he was possessed of the innate chivalry and courtesy of the true Southern gentleman. From early childhood his mentality was apparent, and in school he was promoted from class to class with exceptional rapidity. He passed every examination with excellent results and at the age of fifteen was fully prepared to enter college.

He was sent to New York, passed the entrance examination for Columbia University and was by far the youngest student in the freshman class. In his third year, he applied to the faculty for a position as private tutor, or "coach" to backward students, and their recommendations brought him many more pupils than his time permitted him to handle. The young men thought it a mark of distinction to be able to say "Eckstrom was my tutor." He entered the Law School, passed those examinations, as also the Regent's, with honors, and was admitted to the Bar before he was twenty-two years of age.

A friend interested him in communal work and he took charge of a class of Russian boys in the Hebrew Educational Alliance. He spent one evening every week with the boys whom he had organized into a club. Most of these boys worked during the day and their aim was to advance their education by night-work. Eckstrom, being but a very little older than they, attracted them by his personality and by his earnest endeavors to be of assistance to them. They knew his services were gratuitous, which was another factor in his favor. Neither storms, frost, heat, nor any inconvenience to himself, ever militated against

his prompt appearance every Wednesday evening, and the boys grew to love him. A little incident sealed that love, and warm fellowship was added.

The weekly meetings were devoted to debates on timely subjects selected by the boys or their leader, to talks and readings in history, literature and current events, and fifteen minutes were allotted to questions. Eckstrom had encouraged them to ask any questions that had educational value for every member of the class, and agreed to answer them to the best of his ability. The unrestricted liberty was sometimes embarrassing. Once, a boy said:

"Mr. Eckstrom, is it true that if birds fly over the Dead Sea, the atmosphere poisons them and they drop dead?"

When he told this story to his friends, Eckstrom admitted he knew as little about it as the boys. His common sense told him he must not answer at random. He confessed he had some doubt about the birds being killed in that way, but he would give them exact information at the next meeting. From that time they gave credence to everything he told them, convinced that he would not misinform them, nor misrepresent things.

Ruth had been interested in Settlement work for some time and Wednesday evening happened to be the one her girls' club selected for its meetings. The young couple, meeting under these circumstances, became friendly, to the extent that Eckstrom made an occasional call upon Ruth. Recently she declined to have the car wait for her and Arthur escorted her home, as had happened on the evening in question.

Mr. and Mrs. Harmon liked the young man, who, notwithstanding his attainments and ability, was not at all conceited about them. He was delightful company for young and old, and his admiration of Ruth still hovered on the borders of simple friendship. Soon after the parents entered the library, the door bell rang and directly afterward Philip almost bounded into the room.

"Philip!" was the one word uttered almost concertedly.

"Why are you all so astonished?" said the boy.

"Philip, what is the meaning of this?" said his father sternly.

"Why father, what is the matter? You knew I was coming, did you not?"

"How should I have known it?"

"Didn't you receive the telegram I sent this morning? I wondered why the car was not sent to the station to meet me, but——"

"Philip, we received no telegram——"

The ringing of the bell interrupted him and the butler entered with a telegram on a salver.

"For you, sir. The messenger wishes to know if there is an answer."

Mr. Harmon opened the envelope and found it contained the message.

"Tell the boy there is no answer," said Mr. Harmon. Then addressing Philip again, he continued:

"As your telegram explains nothing, Philip, suppose you tell us why you are here. It is scarcely possible that you failed in your——"

"No, father, I did not fail. My credits in every subject are high and I was complimented by the faculty when I was called before the members yesterday. The dean told me I could enter the university at once on every mark I received, but that my Latin and Greek barred me out."

"I do not understand that at all, Philip. Moreover I am distressed to see that you are not at all ashamed of your failure in Latin and Greek. Your tutors said you were proficient."

Mrs. Harmon looked so unhappy that Philip crossed the room to where she was seated, put his arm around her shoulders, kissed her and said gently:

"Little mother, do not look so distressed; it isn't as bad as you think. My Latin and Greek were perfect so far as my knowledge went, but it will take months of study before I will be able to pass the examinations with credit to myself. Just how the mistake arose as to the amount of classical reading I was to take, I do not know, nor do I know whose was the fault, but I must learn a tremendous amount more than I know now, before I can pass the rigid and exhaustive examination they give. That is all."

His parents looked relieved and Eckstrom said:

"Philip is not the first boy who has been in this position. There is no disgrace attached to it. Fortunately, he is young and a few months more in his case, are of no consequence. He will merely have to continue the study of Latin and Greek."

"Yes, Philip is young and possibly it is just as well. Tomorrow we will see about suitable instructors. Can you suggest any one?"

"Not at this moment," said the young lawyer thoughtfully, "but I have another suggestion to make which may be worthy your consideration."

"You have not been out of college so many years yourself, but that your suggestion in connection with education should be worth while, and we will be pleased to hear and consider it."

"This is my opinion: Philip's education has been in the hands of tutors so long, that I would advise giving him the opportunity to mingle with other students. The competition will fire his ambition, the companionship will broaden his outlook on life and the classroom work will be stimulating—also, leveling."

"Your experienced logic reminds me somewhat of Elsa's spontaneous ideas, and I am interested to know what school you advise."

"None that you possibly have ever supposed you would patronize. Philip needs nothing but Latin and Greek for the next few months, and to my knowledge and belief there is but one institution where that object will be attained—the Jesuit College."

Nothing could have astounded the listeners more than that suggestion, and a stillness of the grave ensued. Mr. Harmon collected his wits and said:

"Your idea is startling because that is the last school that would have occurred to me. I am not bigoted I hope, and I know of a surety, that the training a Jesuit priest receives is the finest there is. I also know no Jesuit's education is considered complete until he has reached his thirty-fifth year. It is generally acceded that their knowledge of the ancient

languages is more profound and more thorough than is obtainable in any other institution of learning, yet the thought that Philip, a Jew, be enrolled as a student there, upset me for an instant."

"David, I don't want our boy to go there," said Mrs. Harmon timidly. "Don't you fear you may place him in a very peculiar position? He may be the only Jew in a college of hundreds of Catholic boys. Remember, the Jesuits never loved the Jews."

"But, Mrs. Harmon, there are some Jews there!" exclaimed Eckstrom. "Not many, to be sure, yet enough to bar out intolerance. And even were Philip the only Jew among all the students, think how creditable if he raises their estimate of our people by his conduct and ability. Philip can do that without much effort."

"That may be true, but Philip is only a boy and you are looking for a man's tact from him," said Mr. Harmon. "Philip, what do you say?"

"Only this, father. My object is to reach the standard required by the university as quickly as possible, and if my knowledge will be acquired more rapidly and quite as thoroughly in the Jesuit College I am willing to go there and take chances."

"Philip, you are the kind of boy we need to stand for Judaism. You may possibly be made to feel prejudice in the beginning, but you may also be successful in repressing, or even eradicating it." Turning to the mother, he added:

"Mrs. Harmon, don't you think that would be worth while?" He had touched Mrs. Harmon upon a sensitive point.

"Truly worth while, Mr. Eckstrom, but possibly beyond Philip's strength. We will consider the suggestion. If you will pardon me, I would say I am very tired, as this has been an arduous day. Let me bid you goodnight." Her husband accompanied her, and Philip followed soon.

"Miss Harmon," said Arthur, looking earnestly at the discreet girl who had been so silent during the discussion, "are you tired too, or had you no interest in the conversation?"

"How can you think me devoid of interest? Mr. Eckstrom, you do not know how we were brought up, or you would know that my father's earliest lessons to his children were, that the well-being of the family was founded upon the well-being of each individual. Philip's future is very close to all our hearts. It required no comment from me."

"Will you tell me if I have overstepped the boundary line of a short acquaintance? Or do you think your parents may think so?"

"On the contrary. The short acquaintance is immaterial, and your evident interest in Philip's career is so earnest, that I know it will influence them in thinking favorably of your plan."

"Thank you for that assurance." He hesitated an instant, then said diffidently:

"And you? Do you think I was presumptuous in attempting to advise a man of your father's great experience, a woman of your mother's deep religious convictions, in such an important matter, a matter that may be so far-reaching in its consequences?"

"Oh, no!" said the girl, flushing at the intense look in his fine, dark eyes, which, as they rested on her face seemed to pierce to her inmost soul. "Do not think that at all, and you may feel quite sure there will be a serious talk on the subject tomorrow morning. When all is settled I will ask Philip to telephone you the verdict."

He laughed at her use of the legal term and brought his visit to a close.

VII

RICHARD

A week later, when Philip was completely initiated into the routine of the Brothers' College and was becoming familiar with the, to him, novel work, he met Richard on the street. The boys had never been friends, for a mental and moral gulf that could not be bridged, stretched between them. They were cordial when they met by accident, but there was seldom an attempt at intimate conversation and never an exchange of visits. So when Richard said:

"Will your father be at home this evening? My father wants to send him some papers," Philip was surprised into answering:

"Are you going to bring them over?"

"I expected to, as I have no date for tonight."

Irritated at the word "date," which Philip despised, he said ungraciously:

"I suppose so, but if he goes out I will let you know."

With a curt nod the boys separated. Richard felt the difference between them more keenly than before, and Philip wondered why the sight of the dissipated boy always aroused his feelings of antagonism.

"Father," said Philip, "Mr. Morton wants to know

if you will be at home tonight. He has some papers for you that Richard will bring over. Why doesn't he send their man with them?"

Mr. Harmon knew the "papers" were doubtless the excuse to send Richard to be interviewed by him, though he had no intention that Philip should know, so he merely said:

"I know about the papers and if he wants Richard to bring them, I see no reason for your irritation, even if you do not like him."

"I don't want you to think I feel myself superior to Richard, but I simply cannot associate with him."

"And why not?" asked the father to induce him to talk.

"That is the great trouble and that is what vexes me. I don't dislike Richard, but I simply cannot tolerate him and if you will excuse me, I will remain in the study this evening while he is here. I have a thesis under way and I will write some more of it tonight."

Mr. Harmon did not press the matter, the more so, because he really desired to be alone with Richard. He earnestly hoped to help the Mortons in bringing their son to a realization of the evils that lay in his path. The previous day, while at luncheon with a friend, the latter began to speak of Max Morton and said:

"He is a fine fellow, and I don't know where he got such a reprobate son."

"Isn't that a harsh term to apply to a boy?" asked Mr. Harmon.

"Not if it's a boy like Richard Morton. I don't believe he has a redeeming quality, or if he has, it is either in embryo, or is hidden so deeply it is practically non-existent. And I know for a positive fact how reprehensible his conduct is. You know I am not a scandal-monger, but——"

"Assuredly not. I remember the Bardeck case very well and your great efforts to suppress all information and keep it *sub rosa*."

"And moreover, in the business world, I have been a close friend of Morton's for many years and that is why I mean to tell you something which I have not mentioned to any one. You are the only man I know who may be able to save Richard."

Harmon made no reply, though his thoughts flew back to the evening when Morton implied the same possibility.

"The story is not hearsay evidence. If it were, I would not repeat it. Last Wednesday when we were riding home from the opera, we were halted by a congestion of vehicles and were compelled to wait several minutes. Looking around in idle curiosity, I saw we were opposite the stage door of a low-grade theatre. Leaning against a lamp-post was young Morton in full evening dress, his hat tilted over one ear, watching the entrance. Had he been less intent upon that, he could not have failed to recognize us, for the electric light inside our car shone full upon my face.

"Ere long a woman, far past girlhood, came out with the mincing steps of a hardened burlesque actress. Richard sprang forward to greet her, put his

arm familiarly through hers and said loudly enough for me to hear: 'I've engaged supper, dearie, in a private room at——' naming a notorious restaurant. 'Here is our taxi and we'll make a gay night of it, just you and I.' I tell you, Harmon, a pang shot through my heart as I thought of his parents, whose chief fault is their indulgence of their children."

"If any one else had told me this, I would not have waited for the end of the story. I would have doubted the truth of it. Not so with you. It is an ugly truth."

"And there is no doubt of its truth. My wife saw it all, but as she is near-sighted she did not recognize Richard, and I am glad. *Facilis descensus Avernus*, yet you may still be in time for Richard's redemption."

"Depend upon it I will put forth every endeavor for the sake of his family. I wish I had known how bad it is and known it sooner."

The story in all its bald ugliness, in connection with the information given by Richard's father, filled Mr. Harmon with deep concern. When the bell rang and Richard was ushered in, orders were given to the butler that his master must not be disturbed by any caller. After the "papers" were duly disposed of, Mr. Harmon told the boy to remain a little while if he had no other engagement.

Richard was a good-looking young man. He was above medium height and carried himself well. But dissipation had already set the first tell-tale mark upon his youthful features, and his eyes showed the light of too much knowledge of a certain or uncer-

tain kind, acquired in the wrong way. Mr. Harmon saw and read the signs, and felt he must use much tact in dealing with Richard. Not knowing exactly how to broach the difficult subject, he asked the boy if he belonged to any club.

"No," said Richard, "not the kind Phil belongs to, if that is what you mean."

"That was not exactly what I meant, for a boy who expects to go to college and is qualifying for a professional career, would naturally join a literary club, deferring membership in a social club until later."

After some preliminary remarks upon clubs and societies in general, Mr. Harmon said:

"Believe me, Richard, when I say it is only my sincere interest in boys in their 'teens, that prompts me to ask you some questions. I have seen you grow up and it is but natural for me to be interested in what concerns your father's son. Besides, I am always interested in Jewish boys as they approach manhood."

"But I am no Jew, Mr. Harmon."

Concealing his consternation at the unexpected rejoinder, Mr. Harmon said kindly:

"Will you tell me Richard, just what you mean by that denial of your ancestry?"

With heightened color, the boy answered promptly:

"I said I am no Jew and I repeat it. Unfortunately, I cannot deny my ancestry to you, but I hate it. I hate Judaism, I hate Jews, and I never was and never will be a Jew." As he spoke, his voice took on force and bitterness.

"But, my boy, all your hatred of the faith and your ancestors cannot alter facts. You were born of Jewish parents, you are a Jew and though you deny it to all the world and to yourself, it remains an unalterable fact. Can you change the color of your eyes? Can you change your form? Can you change your physical appearance? No! no more can you change the faith into which you were born."

"Ah! but I can if I want to. I never expect to be a good Christian and I never was a good Jew, but at least if I do get converted as all my friends advise, I won't have 'Jew' flung at me."

"Are you very sure of that, my poor boy? That little hollow act of conversion, that sprinkling of a little water upon your head, cannot make a Christian of you. Richard, religion is in the feelings, not in the mouth. It is not in the church, not in the synagogue, it is in the heart, in deeds, in actions. And, Jew or Christian, we are judged by those. Would you like to tell me how it happened that you despise

"If you call them that, Mr. Harmon, I can't tell you anything, for it makes me wild; but if you want to know why I am so dead-set against the Jews, I will tell you because I think I will feel better to get it out of my system."

"Tell me, and perhaps I can show you the right and the wrong of some of your ideas,—they cannot be convictions."

"I don't want to blame my mother, but I cannot help thinking some of my hatred of the Jews is due to her indifference to her religion, and her satisfaction in hearing she does not look like a Jewess."

"Never mind that now, Richard. A greater man than I said: 'To thine own self be true, thou canst not then be false to any man.' If you could not and cannot be true to the old religion, how can you be true to the new one you may want to adopt, and of which you know still less than of the one that belongs to you?"

Richard had no reply ready to refute the argument and Mr. Harmon tactfully continued:

"I am talking to you, Richard, as if you were my own boy——"

"You wouldn't have to if I were your boy, and you don't talk like this to Philip," was Richard's clever retort.

"You are right. I do not, because there is no reason why I should. He has always been true to his faith."

"But, Mr. Harmon, can't you understand I never had a faith to which I could cling? Dad is a good enough Jew at heart, I suppose, but he never gave me any Jewish teachings and mother still less. Anyway, I do not remember any religious training. I never went to Sunday School and I don't believe I've been in a synagogue a half-dozen times in my life. I can't help it if I don't adhere to their religion. I never had any religion put into me and I am sure I didn't inherit any."

"I see the wisdom of your argument, and the situation is sad. Religion is the anchor we all need. Around it revolve the virtues, the ethics and the morality of all peoples of all faiths, even as the planets revolve around the sun. But you are still young

enough to become a Jew and a good one, if you listen to proper direction."

"No, I can't do it, Mr. Harmon." Then, in a sullen, semi-defiant tone he added: "I mean to marry a Christian."

More shaken than he would have cared to confess, Mr. Harmon said:

"Are you not rather young to think of marriage?"

"I knew you'd say that and I suppose I am, but I want to get married all the same."

Mr. Harmon did not reply, and Richard, fathoming his thoughts said:

"Are you wondering on what I expect to marry? That's the only thing that has kept me from it. I can't expect Dad to let me bring a Christian girl into his house as his daughter, and I have never earned enough to keep myself, let alone a wife. But just as soon as I land another job I'm going to marry."

"Richard, I won't say anything in reference to your marrying when you 'land a job,' but I do want to call your attention to the fact that you lose, or give up, one position after another. Had you not better postpone the marriage question for awhile?"

"Not if I can get a job with a salary big enough to support a wife." He did not observe that Mr. Harmon drew his hand across his mouth to conceal a smile of half-pity and half-amusement that would not be repressed, and he continued:

"Do you know, Mr. Harmon, when you began to talk about marrying, I was afraid I was in for a lecture on inter-marriage."

"Were you? Well, if that is your attitude, I won't say anything about it, though I had no intention of 'lecturing' or even of being personal. I merely would have spoken to you as I did to my own children very recently."

As Mr. Harmon anticipated, the boy's curiosity, or possibly his interest was aroused, for he rejoined quickly:

"Do you have to talk to Philip about inter-marriage?"

"I do not 'have to,' but I like to talk about current events to my children, and this question has been given wide publicity for some time."

"That's so, but if you had talked about it to me, I would have thought it personal and would have been very indignant."

"I judged so, consequently I remained silent."

"Will you tell me what you said to Philip?"

Seeing the boy really wanted to know, and encouraged by the interest he displayed, Mr. Harmon said:

"Certainly, if you want me to. Deep as are my religious convictions, I can honestly say I think there is not much harm in the mixed marriages, as marriages. They hark back to the very early ages and were sometimes condoned, sometimes condemned, by religious authorities of all denominations. The idea that a mixed marriage will bring unity of religious beliefs is not only fallacious, but misleading. One party, in most marriages, is usually weaker than the other in religious beliefs, and that one will invariably be drawn into the faith of the stronger, except under unusual conditions.

"Take your own case as an illustration. You know little of your own religion, have never learned the sacredness of the Ten Commandments in the plan of the universe. You want to marry a non-Jewess and hating your own religion would be swayed by her and would adopt hers. You would be as indifferent to your new creed as to the old one, consequently you would be no credit to Christianity either."

"What difference would that make? There would be one Christian more and one Jew less in the community."

"We will pass that by, as every soul will be held accountable for individual actions. The thought in the mind of all thinking persons remains the same. In the natural order of things, marriages result in children. Here it is where we Jews feel the situation keenly. What will the children of mixed-marriages be, in their relation to God? Do you know what I mean by the line of least resistance?"

"Yes, the path that is easiest to follow."

"Exactly, and it will be easier for those children to be Christians. Judaism can be perpetuated only through the children and every earnest, true Jew knows that mixed marriages are a menace to our ancient faith. The children of those marriages will be lost to Judaism."

"Maybe I would have been as good a Jew as Philip, if I had been taught. Grandma did want to teach me, but it caused trouble all around and she desisted; and once she told me it nearly broke her heart to see me grow up without any religious anchor. Now I can see why, if she felt as you do."

Richard was so subdued and thoughtful that Mr. Harmon asked himself if his words had possibly made some impression on the boy.

"Richard, there is something more I want to say to you. You know my friendship for your father, and I am fond of you. Will you take offense if I become a little more personal?"

Richard flushed as he replied:

"Have you heard anything about me? Anything against me, I mean."

"I am afraid I have, and I just want to warn you against——"

"Against what?" asked Richard wrathfully.

"Against low associations. That should not provoke you to anger."

"I thought you were going to say something else. I know Mr. Simon saw me one night last week and I thought he might have told you."

"Is it something you are ashamed to tell me?"

"Yes. But I want to say, if you know about it, it's all off and you needn't be afraid that I will disgrace myself and the family by marrying her. When I told her I had no work and that Dad had cut down my allowance, she cut me dead."

"I am thankful you escaped so easily. Do not forget that it was an escape for you, and take this little bit of advice from me: be careful with whom you associate. A man's associates can either help him unconsciously to be a man, or can utterly ruin his character and his future."

Rising, Mr. Harmon extended one hand, placed the

other on Richard's shoulder and looked deep into the boy's eyes. They fell before his searching, though kindly, gaze, and he said:

"No one has ever talked to me like this. How I wish they had!"

"There are parents, Richard, who can speak to other people's children far more freely than to their own. I know it, though I cannot understand it. It would be so much better if perfect confidence existed between them. Good-night, boy, and remember."

VIII

VARIED HAPPENINGS

There was sadness, mingled with joy, in the Netter family. Bernard Mendelson, a merchant from Buenos Ayres, had come to New York to visit his sister from whom he had long been separated. Twelve years before, when Bernard was twenty-six years of age, he was offered a position as bookkeeper in an exporting firm in Buenos Ayres and had accepted it. He proved himself of value to the house and was made the junior partner. He had money, was a good companion and was invited to the homes of the best people in the town. There were a few Jewish girls there, but none who attracted him. He wished to marry and establish a home of his own, and made the visit to his sister the objective point of his return to New York. In reality, he hoped to meet some girl who would appeal to him and who would care enough for him to leave her country and go to South America with him as his wife.

At the house of a mutual friend, he met Fanny Netter. Though her youth had passed, he did not consider that detrimental to his future happiness. It gave force to his conviction that she would not care for frivolities and would adapt herself to the strange

country and the stranger customs in the land to which he took her. Within a short time he was a frequent visitor in the Netter home; the family, as also Fanny, learned to love him and the marriage was consummated. Much happiness was felt, but it was tinged with pain at thought of the separation which was imminent. Almost immediately after the wedding, the couple had sailed for Brazil enroute to their final destination.

Naomi would not replace her in the home, but agreed to pay the wages of a little maid. Her Hebrew class was successful and her boys were devoted to her. Dr. X was gratified, and one Saturday called her to his study before he entered the synagogue.

"Miss Netter," he said, "if you would like a position as teacher in a down town school, I will recommend you and you need not study to obtain a teacher's license. They need a teacher in one of the classes for Russian children."

"I would prefer that to the public school," said Naomi.

Dr. X sent her the letter of introduction and she was put in charge of a class of fifty-odd foreign boys and girls, whose average age was ten years. Most of them had been in America less than two months. The salary was not large, but the hours were short, and Naomi sought work for her spare time. Her reputation as Hebrew teacher reached the rabbis of other congregations, and ere long she had classes for every afternoon and Sunday mornings. In addition, she often gave private instruction in the even-

ings. She was overflowing with ambition and she put not only her energy and enthusiasm, but every fibre of her being into her work. Times without number had she been warned not to "put so much of herself" into her teaching, but to no purpose. Doctor X, whose interest in her did not wane, said upon one occasion, when unperceived by her he had stood in her class-room several minutes:

"Miss Netter, take a piece of advice from an old man who has spent his life in teaching and preaching. I admire your enthusiasm and envy you your vitality, but I wish to warn you not to dissipate your nerve-force. Nature is an exacting mistress and she will collect a toll for each fraction of infringement on her domain."

"Oh Doctor, but I am so well," she said with a happy smile that showed her faultless teeth and with animation that made her almost pretty: "and I am strong and I never get tired."

"I understand," said the rabbi. "You are young and you have been liberally endowed with a remarkable brain, with nerves seemingly of iron and with a healthy body. All of these will stand much abuse, but be careful. And, conserve your energies."

Again Noami laughed gaily. It was well she did not know how heavy would be the toll exacted by Mother Nature.

Many months sped by and the school friendship between Elsa and Leila grew deeper and closer. The Easter holidays were approaching, when there would be a week's vacation. Elsa asked her mother if she might invite Leila to spend a day with her.

"Surely, dear, but do you think she will come? You have not exchanged visits, and from all I know of Leila, she may be too proud to accept an invitation which she cannot reciprocate."

"I never thought of that," replied Elsa seriously, "and you may be right." Then, with her accustomed lightning-change from gravity to gayety, she exclaimed:

"Oh, I have an idea. Why can't I tell her I want her to meet me at the Art Museum, in the section where the latest Brown pictures are on exhibition? I can add, carelessly, that if we stay there too long, I'd like to have her go home with me to lunch, as we live so near."

"The plan is not a bad one and she may agree. If not, how would it be to invite her to the Seder festival? They cannot celebrate it or probably will not, and she may prefer that."

"I'll speak to her tomorrow, mother, and in one way or another I will try to persuade her."

Elsa's persuasions prevailed and a meeting in the Art Museum, with luncheon to follow, was the result. After a happy morning spent in admiration or criticism, whichever it happened to be, of the pictures, Leila accompanied Elsa home to stay the remainder of the day.

Mrs. Harmon's tact was evinced from the moment of introduction. It was unnecessary, for Leila with innate pride showed no self-consciousness, if indeed she felt any. Such luxury and elegance of appointments were unknown to her, except possibly from

books, but she was as self-possessed as though in the school-room.

Mrs. Harmon greeted her warmly but not effusively, saying:

"Leila, my dear, I need not say I am glad to know you, for you are no stranger to me, but I am glad to see the girl of whom Elsa never tires of speaking."

"I guess Leila knows that, Mumsy, and——"

"I hope Elsa hasn't said too much about me," said Leila slightly embarrassed. "My dear father often said no one should be placed on a pedestal by admiring friends."

Mrs. Harmon laughed and asked:

"Because the position is insecure and one might easily fall?"

"That is not exactly what he said, but it means about the same."

"What did he say?" asked Elsa.

"That it is not easy to live up to the position."

Luncheon was announced and was served without formality. The meal was simple because Mrs. Harmon wished her guest to feel at ease.

Leila spent a very happy afternoon. She was about to leave, when Philip came home and was introduced to her. When the door closed after her, he exclaimed in frank, boyish admiration:

"Is that your Leila Netter, of whom you never stop speaking? She looks and acts the part of a Barpness de Rothschild, and what glorious eyes she has! Mother did you notice that braid of hair and its color? I wonder what a hair-dresser would pay for it!"

"Why, Philip!" exclaimed his mother, "I have never known you to notice a girl in your life, and it is positively funny to listen to you."

"Perhaps I have not met one worth observing, and really mother, now that I think of it, I believe I can count all the girls I know on the fingers of one hand. Maybe there are scores more like her."

"No doubt of it," said Mrs. Harmon. "But regardless of her 'glorious eyes' and her 'braid of hair'" and she mocked her boy fondly, "she is charming, and I am pleased with the friendship of the girls."

Leila's description of her day's enjoyment, from the entrance to the museum until she left the "palace" which was Elsa's home, was so vivid that her family nearly lived it with her. But of Philip she only remarked:

"I almost forgot to tell you that just as I was leaving, Elsa's brother, of whom she speaks so much, came home and we were introduced."

"No, I did not speak to him nor he to me," was her simple answer to their questions. Her thoughts were her own.

The day of Philip's graduation from the Jesuit College had arrived. There was a comparatively large graduation class and the chapel was filled with relations of the graduates, the limited capacity of the place barring all others. Philip had been told he passed "creditably." His family knew it and were glad the time of probation was over. Philip's pleasure lay in the fact, that the doors of the university would be opened for his admission without further delay.

Philip read a Latin thesis which was incomprehensible to the audience. Judging by the applause given by the faculty and the priests, it must have shown marked ability. The diplomas were awarded and the various medals, each recipient of the latter receiving his due mead of applause. Then the head of the institution, an old, white-haired man, came forward on the platform and said with much dignity:

"There is one more medal to be awarded, one coined especially for this occasion. It is a medal for proficiency in the so-called dead languages. We have never before had a student who was worthy of it, and the young man, upon whom it is to be bestowed as a special mark of honor, is not of our faith. He is a Jew, Philip Harmon, by name, and he is the first Jew who has ever received a medal from us. Mr. Harmon, please come forward and receive this medal of honor made expressly for you."

A storm of applause greeted the appearance of the boy. He was white to the lips from the shock of surprise and joy. He accepted the medal with a trembling hand and a low bow. The applause ceased only after the boy had resumed his place among the students.

When the congratulations were over and the family together in their car, Mr. Harmon said:

"My boy, I cannot adequately express my feelings nor those of your mother, but this is an occasion that will go down in the history of our family and the medal will become an heirloom."

"Philip," said his mother, vainly trying to repress

her tears of joy as she held his hand, "you have made us very happy and we are proud of your achievement. At this moment I do not like to reproach you, but why did you not tell us of this?"

"Mother, dear, I did not know it myself until my name was called. Your surprise was no greater than mine."

In the evening their neighbors, the Mortons, called, and later the spacious rooms were filled with others who had come to congratulate. The guests made many attempts to lionize Philip, but in vain. The boy was pleased with their words of approval, but the flattery made him "uncomfortable" as he said afterwards. He was glad when the evening was over and none but the Mortons were left. He joked with Nina, who alternately pouted and smiled, or said something humorous. A general laugh followed her remark when she said:

"I read a clever thing that a girl said to a fellow after his graduation and I meant to say it to you, but I can't remember what it was. After this, when I intend to get off something bright that I have read, I shall learn it by heart."

Philip's ringing laugh disconcerted her. Then she said:

"I don't know what's so funny about it, and anyway it isn't original."

"What on earth does the child mean?" said her mother.

"Just this, mother. In our literature class we were reading about famous women in France. One of

them, Madame Talleyrand, or Roland, or de Stael, I forget which and it doesn't matter much, was noted for her great wit and her amusing anecdotes. She had some trouble with her maid and discharged her from her service. In revenge, the maid told how her Madame wrote down every witty thing she heard, and each clever story. She learned them by heart and used them afterwards in conversations. And if she could do it, why can't I?"

"Your story has a little foundation perhaps, but if I were in your place, Nina, I would not ascribe it to any one in particular," said Mr. Harmon. "Public speakers, whether men or women, very frequently are at a loss to find something amusing to say and many of them do take notes or even write down the exact words of others. But they must have pretty good memories not to repeat them in the presence of the originator. Often, too, a trivial thing gives a speaker a happy idea. I know a popular lecturer, a brilliant, gifted, magnetic orator, who tells this story about himself.

"He was invited to speak in a country town, where the train service was poor. Through no fault of his own, he reached the church at a very late hour. The lecture was scheduled for eight o'clock and the town-clock boomed forth nine strokes, as he alighted from the train. He had been nervous for more than an hour, and thoughts of the ill-humor of the tired and impatient audience that awaited him, had no soothing effect upon his already tense nerves. The customary applause that greeted him wherever he appeared was

absent when he walked to the front of the platform where a pedestal stood, upon which was a tumbler of water. The pedestal was not heavy and as he placed his hand on the edge, it swayed a little and the glass fell to the floor. The audience tittered. He laughed, as a bright idea occurred to him and he said genially: 'Ladies and gentlemen: You think that fall was the result of an accident, or of my awkwardness. You are mistaken. The glass could not help it. It is a tumbler.' Genuine laughter and hearty applause greeted the sally, he told an anecdote or two, good humor was restored and an appreciative and interested audience was the result. Nina, do not try your French lady's methods."

Soon after the Mortons left, Philip went to his room. Restlessly he paced back and forth, reviewing the events of the day. He felt no elation, no pride in his achievements, and wondered why he had that indescribable feeling of dissatisfaction with himself, a feeling of depression because of something left undone. He stood by the open window and as he gazed up into the starry sky, he murmured:

"Is this what they call the 'blues'? If so, I do not like it."

"Philip!" he continued, addressing himself, "father would say you are following the line of least resistance, and it looks that way."

Shaking himself mentally, he laughed, and as he drew down the window shade he said to himself: "Why can't I stop thinking about that girl's beautiful hair and her glorious eyes?"

IX

PLANNING THE FUTURE

Professor Mansfield, teacher of music in the High School which Elsa and Leila attended, was a German who often amused his pupils by his pronunciation of the English language. He had heard of the talent of the two girls, listened to their playing and said:

"You vill blay a duet on de Commencement Day. My young ladies, I compliment you. Dis is not dalent, it iss chenius you two have. To Shermanny you should go to learn more."

"I expect to go to Europe this summer," said Elsa. "My father may leave me in Germany to perfect myself in music."

"Dat is goot. And you, Miss Nedder?"

A fleeting shadow crossed Leila's face, though she said cheerfully:

"I hope to get a position as a school teacher and will continue my violin lessons. I hope by faithful practice to become proficient enough to teach music."

Recognizing his unconscious mistake, the professor said quickly:

"Very goot, very goot, Miss Nedder. You vill be a success in vatever you do. Maybe it iss, dat rich man vill at de Commencement be, and maybe it iss

he vill educate you further in music. Dat would fine be," he ended in excitement, and the more excited he was, the more atrocious was his slaughter of our language.

"But, Professor Mansfield, I could not accept that from a stranger."

"Do not say you could not. Dat don't show much sense. You must. For de sake of art you must. Art, Miss Nedder, is for a rich man to help along—vot you call it? Ja, ja, to encourage, and for de sake of art, if a rich man vill pay for it, you must be glad and study, study much. Den, ven you are a artist and are rich, you can pay him back again, ain't it?"

The friendship between the two girls had grown closer, and more than one Saturday had been spent together. Leila was glad to go to Harmon's, but had never asked Elsa to visit her. While the professor was talking to Leila that day a few weeks before, Elsa's mind was working rapidly and her thoughts tumbled over each other in quick succession. Before she retired that night, her plan had been divulged to her mother. Elsa often wondered why her sympathetic "Mumsy" was so non-committal, nor did she know that her idea had been communicated to her father.

Both Elsa and Leila graduated with honors. Their duet was a master-piece and the vast audience did not cease applauding until it was repeated. Mr. Harmon and his wife, accustomed as they were to their daughter's playing, enjoyed it as much as if it had been unfamiliar to them. It was the first time

they had heard Leila play, for she could not be persuaded to bring her violin when she visited Elsa. As her bow swept the strings with the loving, understanding stroke of the born musician, Mr. and Mrs. Harmon were startled at the artist's unmistakable touch, and with affectionate interest they watched the girl. They saw how completely her individuality was merged in her music, and how her mind was concentrated on the instrument she held to her cheek as tenderly as a gentle mother caresses her babe. They observed the flush of delight which the true artist feels in the music his touch evokes, and Mrs. Harmon understood why Elsa had "plans".

At dinner the same evening, the conversation naturally turned to the Commencement exercises. Philip, who was home for his vacation, said, greatly to Elsa's satisfaction:

"Father, I imagine you are very happy today, and I know we are all proud of Elsa."

"Elsa's music, if that is what you mean, assuredly makes me happy. I do not like to think of the time that must elapse before we will hear it again, although I want her to remain in Europe. 'Chenius' as Professor Mansfield says, should be cultivated, and, if there be means at hand, it would be nearly criminal to neglect it."

"That is why I feel so badly, father," said Elsa, "for Leila has genius, too. It will have a more or less depressing effect upon me when I am across the ocean. My thoughts will revert to Leila and her drudgery in the school-room."

"I would not call teaching 'drudgery' if I were you," said her mother reprovingly.

"I wouldn't either, in any other instance. But the thought of that girl, with indisputable genius, to be compelled to teach will always make me miserable."

"Elsa," said her father, "if some good fairy were to appear now and tell you she will grant you any wish you may express, but do not forget it is only one wish, what would you tell her?"

"To send Leila to Europe with me next month and allow her to remain as long as I do," was the unhesitating reply.

"Hurrah for our Elsa!" shouted Philip. "I knew you would say that."

"I'd like to hear how you 'knew' what I would say. I don't believe I have mentioned Leila's name to you, ever."

"No, you have not, at least I have no recollection to the contrary," and Philip laughed to cover his momentary embarrassment: "but I know your unselfishness, and your devotion to your friend."

The parents exchanged glances of pleasure and Mrs. Harmon said:

"Children, this may be a suitable opportunity for confession. I want to tell you, Elsa came to me several weeks ago and made me the confidant of her plan to induce father to send Leila abroad, too."

"Why, mother!" exclaimed Ruth, who up to this moment was so engrossed in her own thoughts that she had not entered into the conversation. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because, my dear, it was Elsa's secret for the time, but if I had thought of telling you, I should have hesitated, for——" here she laughed and the others joined her.

Ruth blushed prettily, as she replied good-humoredly: "You hesitated for fear I would tell. I don't like that reputation in my family. I don't tell things."

"No, you don't, as we all know to our cost these days. All the telling you do is to him, spelled with capitals, HIM," said irrepressible Elsa. "Anyway, where is 'him' tonight?"

"Coming later," said Ruth rather laconically, though her impatience began to manifest itself in restlessness. "But I wouldn't have told Arthur if you had said I shouldn't. Tell us the rest, mother, will you?"

"We had not heard Leila play, and no persuasions would induce the modest girl to bring her violin here. True, she might have used father's old instrument, but she refused. Refused in a gentle, gracious manner, but it was a decided refusal. We had some doubt as to Elsa's judgment, tinged as it was by her love for her friend and her desire to further her musical education. We therefore said nothing about it, awaiting this day."

"Mother, father, will you give Leila this chance?" said Elsa, quivering with excitement. "I don't know what it is to be poor, but I know she must be disappointed and feel unhappy when she compares my opportunities and hers. She couldn't possibly help it, brave as she is under her trials. Her sister Naomi

has worked so hard to help her, and Dora's salary meant so much to them, and Dora had to resign because her throat is so weak, and now, won't they all be happy?" She paused for sheer lack of breath.

"Mother and I have come to the conclusion that Leila should have the advantage of European study and if she accepts our invitation, she can go with you."

"Oh, father, how shall I thank you? What shall I say? Oh, how good and kind you are!" She jumped up from her chair and gave him what he called an "Elsa hug." Then she said:

"I never thought about it before, but isn't it lovely to have money enough to do things to help people?"

"Elsa, my dear, even the poorest people can help each other if the heart is there. I have seen an overworked, underfed woman, the mother of six children, go in and out of her own miserable rooms to the adjoining ones, to help a sick neighbor. She washed the neglected children of the sick woman, she gave the invalid a cup of tea although she had no bread to give with it, and helped her by many other little acts of kindness."

"I know, father, but think of what you are doing and how much it will cost."

"It will be an expense, but if my means permit of it, why not? Many a rich man has done the same thing to aid poor and struggling students, so it is nothing unusual. Giving to others has been my delight from childhood. I remember how happy it made me to give things away, whether it was a toy, or a book, or money, and I hope my children will

always give in proportion to their means and if dire necessity arises, even beyond their means. A little self-denial makes not only stronger and better men and women, but it makes them feel as though they were doing some good in the world by helping others."

"When may I tell Leila?"

"Not at all, my child. Invite Leila for luncheon Saturday. I would like to have you go to Temple and she may join us there."

"I am sure she will do that. Her father owned a pew and when she was a little girl she often attended services with him."

"Then ask her and when she comes home with us, I will unfold our plans for her."

A slight commotion in the hall caused a quick "pardon me" from Ruth and she disappeared. When she returned with Arthur Eckstrom, his right of possession was apparent in the protecting arm he had thrown around her waist. An acquaintance of three years, a harmony of interests and an ambition for his rise to eminence in his profession, indicated a happy union. As the parents were to take Elsa abroad, it was to be a mid-summer marriage and the preparations were almost completed. Ruth's quiet tastes, her dislike of society, as society, and an innate abhorrence of ostentation, were shared by Arthur, and the wedding was to be a simple affair for only a few intimate friends.

"Oh Arthur," exclaimed Elsa, hoping to tell the news first. "Did Ruth tell you about Leila?"

"When, little sister? In the two minutes we were in the hall just now? Hardly."

"'Two minutes'?" teased Philip. "If I were about to be hung and if that were to be the length of your two minutes, roasting alive wouldn't take much longer."

"All right, Phil," said Arthur, when the laugh at his expense had subsided. "Just wait. Your day will come when some dear girl will captivate you and hold your heart and life and happiness in the hollow of her dear little hand," and he stroked Ruth's as he spoke. "Then, if you have not seen her for two days, as I have not seen Ruth, I mistake my man if you will know whether your greeting will last two minutes or twenty. It seemed less than two minutes didn't it, sweetheart?" he added to Ruth.

But Ruth did not reply. Her cup of joy was filled to the brim, was so near overflowing that she often trembled at her happiness. Arthur was esteemed by all his colleagues and had an extensive clientele. His parents approved the match and their letters to her, were Ruth's most precious treasures. Her parents approved and gave him their love as freely as they gave it to Ruth, and he was an affectionate big brother to the others.

"Why so pensive, Philip?" said Arthur, teasing in his turn. "Did you leave her in Baltimore? I'm sorry for you if you did. No chance of seeing her for more than three months."

Philip flushed angrily and his parents looked concerned. Seeing their grave faces, he shook off his momentary petulance and said gaily:

"Arthur can't rise above the 'girl' question these days, or I am sure he wouldn't have said that." Then

more seriously: "I have no time in Baltimore to think of girls. I am working so diligently that I am known as 'Grind' Harmon, but I don't enjoy the soubriquet. I have not 'gone in' for the social side of college life in a college town, and I have refused invitations until they ceased to come. My thoughts are bound up in the profession I have selected, and Commencement Day cannot come too soon—the commencement of my career. I don't know one girl in Baltimore."

During Philip's explanation the shadow lifted from his mother's face, and she repeated:

"Not even one?"

"None that I can recall, so you can judge of the impression they made upon me."

She responded gaily, for her mind and heart were now at ease. That a girl's long braid of bright hair had enmeshed Philip's heart long ago, was as absent from her thoughts that evening as it was a living presence with her son.

"Arthur," she said, "we will excuse you and Ruth if you wish or better still, we will go upstairs. But why did you not bring your cousin with you as you promised?"

"It was his evening at the Settlement and he never fails to go there. He was sorry, but will come another time."

Ruth and Arthur, left alone to talk of their future, were soon absorbed in each other. Philip walked with his arm around Elsa's waist and at the head of the stairs kissed her goodnight.

"Philip, isn't it lovely of father to send Leila away for three years?"

"It is, but if her folks allow her to go, how they will miss her!"

"More than I will be missed?" she asked wistfully.

"Yes. For from what you have told us, she is the bright particular star in their universe, the light of the house."

"Waxing poetical, brother mine? But that is not difficult when Leila is the subject."

"Difficult?" echoed the boy, as he went to his room.

"No, it is easy. It is 'difficult' to refrain."

X

MEMORIES

Elsa was home again, another Elsa, grown dignified as the length of her skirts had increased, or mayhap because of her three years' association with reserved, self-contained German girls. Her life and Leila's were similar to that of all earnest students. Mr. Harmon, knowing the effects of idleness on young people, had insisted upon other work besides music, and the girls were enrolled in an exclusive *Hohe-Töchter-Schule*, where they followed a carefully selected course of study. For recreation, under special supervision, they visited art museums, the best theaters and all good operas.

Elsa was a finished pianist and was recognized as a composer of no small merit. Leila's progress had been phenomenal. Much sorrow had entered into her life and it was to this that one of her professors ascribed the soulfulness of her music. Be that as it may, she was an artist. Hers was a sad return home, for death and worse than death, had invaded the Netter household.

One evening, soon after her return, Elsa and her mother were alone in the music-room. Mrs. Harmon was occupied with some dainty needlework and Elsa

sat at the piano, where she had been improvising. The low and subdued chords were in harmony with their mood.

"How quickly the years speed by!" said Mrs. Harmon, "and how much tragedy can be crowded into them. How much of sorrow!"

Elsa turned from the piano, but her mother motioned for her to continue, and said:

"Don't stop playing, dear, it is too beautiful. What have you called it? It must have an appealing name, because the *leit-motif* appeals to one's deepest emotions."

"I am glad you feel it, mother. I have given it no name as yet. I wish titles came to me as readily as melodies. The melody speaks to me in memories of the past."

"Why, there is your title, child, without any thought. None could be more appropriate. The music has filled my soul with memories of the past, tonight. There is one sad strain in your composition for which I cannot account. I often thank God that no deep sorrow has come into our lives, and surely there is none in yours."

"That is true, mother. The sorrow is not personal, it is only a painful memory of Leila's sorrows. It was hard enough when she heard of the sudden death of her mother, and I cannot bear to recall her self-reproach for having gone away. But her mother had been frail for years and the girls had always feared for her. When they wrote Leila about the terrible fate of poor Naomi, her grief and agony were in-

describable. All she could say was to repeat the words incessantly, 'and she did it for me, she did it for me.' I surmised they wrote her either too much or too little, but I did not see the letters. I only know poor Naomi's mind is gone."

She turned towards the piano again and as her fingers strayed gently over the keys, she spoke in a low tone:

"Mother, Dora wrote her you were their guardian angel, the only 'ray of sunshine in their dark night of woe.' I know you were and you surely know just what happened. Will you tell me now?"

The improvisation ceased and the soft music of a nocturne filled the room, as Mrs. Harmon began:

"There is not much to tell, dear. One day Dora telephoned me they were in great trouble and asked if father would call on Doctor Grey, their family physician, and speak to him about Naomi, who was under treatment. I immediately went to their house and father to the doctor's office. Doctor Grey told him the poor girl was overworked, had taxed mental and physical strength to the utmost limit, in consequence had become intensely nervous and irritable, and melancholia resulted.

"Nothing roused or pleased her any more, not even a reference to Leila or to her own neglected classes, and everything annoyed her. Hoping to interest her, I invited her and Dora to ride through the park with me, but it was useless. I often called there, for she was at home most of the time, having been compelled to give up all work. This naturally added to her

melancholy. Again and again I invited her to ride, but she refused every advance ungraciously."

"How unlike our Naomi, who was so appreciative, so grateful for the least attention or kindness."

"I know, but her disease took that form. She would sit at the window for hours at a time and would resent any interference. The only diversion, if it can be called that, was the walk of an hour's duration each afternoon with Dora. Once, just after they had left the house, she saw a lady coming from the opposite direction and remarked quietly: 'When she gets close enough I'm going to slap her face.' Suiting the action to the word, she did so, notwithstanding Dora's horrified protest.

"Doctor Grey had not warned them that her reason was toppling, for he had a flickering hope that her iron constitution and well-balanced mind might conquer. Dora took her home, sent for the doctor, who said he had feared an outbreak, but not so soon. He knew now it was unsafe to keep her home, where there was no one but the invalid Dora and a German cousin who went to live with them after the mother's death. The doctor sent her to an institution from which death alone can release her. She rarely gets unmanageable, knows where she is and is willing to remain there, but does not want to see any one she ever knew."

Mrs. Harmon ceased abruptly, then exclaimed with a shudder:

"Elsa! you are playing the 'Funeral March of a Marionette.' Why?"

"Why? Because without a mind, can any one be anything more or less than a marionette? And Naomi is dead to us all. Oh, mother, mother."

There was a crashing discord as Elsa's head drooped forward over the key-board, and convulsive sobs shook her frame. When she regained her self-control, she continued:

"I cannot bear to think that that girl's wonderful mind is unbalanced, gone. Mother dear, you taught me to be religious and never to question what God does. I will never forget the many things you have always said to imbue us with as much faith as you and father have, but whenever I think of Naomi Netter, my faith in God's justice is shaken."

"It is the first real sorrow that has entered your life, Elsa, and I suppose it is but natural for rebellious thoughts to arise, yes, and even doubts of the justice of God's doings. My heart aches as yours does, and in poor Naomi's case, outraged nature has demanded a fearful penalty. But do not call it God's injustice because you can find no other name for it, dear."

"But what else can I call it? Naomi, the prop and stay of that unhappy family, whose lives have been a succession of sorrowful events with no brightness nor joy!" exclaimed the girl.

"Don't say that, Elsa. I do not want to make light of their many trials, nor will I attempt to deny them, but was it not a great joy to them when Fanny married that good man? And are their lives not brightened now, by her descriptions in her weekly letters

of her two little ones and the promise that ere long they will come here on a visit and will possibly remain? You will never know the happiness in that household after Leila went abroad to study. Their regret lasted only until her first letters came."

"I know that, but it was Naomi's dream of happiness to see Leila a renowned musician, and there is no justice——"

"Listen to me, Elsa, and maybe you will obtain a different angle of vision. When you were in the famous picture galleries of Europe, when you saw an unusually large canvas with many figures represented, when you marveled at the magnificent perspective, the distant sky and cloud effects, do you remember whether you stood close to the picture?"

"Indeed not, mother. The larger the picture, the further away I stood in order to get an intelligent impression of the whole. But what bearing has that on our talk of Naomi?"

"Wait, dear, until I ask another question and you may be able to judge. Do you remember the oriental rug establishment down town, and how interested you were in watching the Persian artist weaving his rug from a very small, insignificant-looking pattern?"

"Yes, and the rug almost grew as we watched. I have often wished I had seen it completed, but that could not have happened in the limited space of the show-window."

"And if you had seen it completed, could your eye have embraced the rug in its entirety?"

"Only if it had been hanging on a wall and I had stood some distance away."

"Exactly. Are you beginning to see the trend of my questions?"

"Mother," said Elsa solemnly, "I think I am, but tell me anyway."

"I hoped you would see, my dear. God is the Painter, he is the Artisan for all humanity, and at the end of time when his painting and weaving are completed, he will again see his work and know it is good. God's plan for the universe is perfect, but we are too near the picture. We can see but part of it. We see the back ground and the shadows, the fore-ground with its lights and shades; and we can see what is within the scope of our vision, but we cannot see nor comprehend the perfect whole. Therefore we cannot see the wisdom of the sorrow and unhappiness all around us; and above all, we, who know so little must not question the wisdom or the justice of the Almighty One."

Elsa did not reply, and her mother continued:

"Let us drop this serious conversation and talk of something more cheerful. For some time before your return, father and I planned a dance to be given to your friends in honor of your return."

"Oh, mother, how darling of you! When is it to be?" said the girl eagerly, as she rose from the piano stool and seated herself on an ottoman at her mother's feet.

"Our first idea was to give it immediately upon your return, but the warm weather prevented. And now——"

"And now, mother," interrupted Elsa, "let us wait

a little while. Philip is coming home for Thanksgiving, can't it be then?"

"Most assuredly. Philip is working too hard and grudges every moment that keeps him from study. Do you know what he did last year? I am positive you do not, because if he kept it from us, he did not write it to you."

"What was it? Something good I know. Philip has always tried to do good for some one, and I have sometimes wondered if that is not one reason he chose medicine for his profession," said Elsa enthusiastically. The sister and brother were very close.

"Father has often said how glad he is that our boy will have means to direct his life's purpose,—that he will be free to treat the poor to his heart's content. He laughed as he said he feared Philip was too great an idealist to ever give a thought to the financial end of it."

"I am sure he won't, or rather, he can't. He reminds me of that rabbi, our great-uncle, who came home on a very rainy day, minus his umbrella and overshoes. When asked where he had left them, he had to consider a minute, then said: 'I gave them to a poor, shivering, half-drowned old man, and have been unhappy ever since, that I did not give him my overcoat.' Philip would do the same thing, mother."

"Very likely. A short time before his vacation, a year ago, Philip heard there was a colony of poor Jews in the suburbs of Baltimore, among them a number of boys and half-grown men. Some one said in his hearing, it was a pity that no rabbi or compe-

tent leader offered to do some uplift work. This was all Philip needed. His Saturday afternoons were often free and the following Saturday he went there. A few young men were loitering in a little park and he began to converse with them. These young men were decent and respectable, but were out of work. The result of the conversation was that Philip went back that evening, formed a club and became their leader. Two or three weeks later, before coming home for the summer, he mapped out a course of reading and study, and upon his return to Baltimore gave up one evening each week and every Sunday afternoon to them."

"I guess they worship him," said his sister.

"I imagine so, and the pleasure Philip derives is compensation enough for him."

"What does he teach them?"

"What doesn't he teach them? Modern Judaism, ethics and morality for the spiritual side of the work, and literature, history and politics in the form of debates, for current events. He has enlisted two serious-minded young men to assist him. That reminds me, he has invited one of them to come home with him Thanksgiving."

"I hear father. I am glad he is home, for it is raining heavily."

After kissing wife and daughter, Mr. Harmon remarked:

"You two look cosy in here with the subdued lights. What have you been talking about?"

"Almost everything that has happened during Elsa's absence."

The telephone interrupted her, Elsa went to answer it and said:

"Oh, Leila, is it you? Wait and I'll ask father. Father, Leila wants your advice, and asks if you will be at home tomorrow forenoon."

"Tell her I have an important meeting at ten o'clock, but I will send the car for her. She can consult me on my return and remain here for luncheon."

A short telephone conversation ensued and when Elsa came back she said:

"I wonder what Leila wants. She would not think of bothering father about anything unimportant."

"I suppose not, but we will know tomorrow. I am busy tonight, for I must arrange my notes for the charity meeting tomorrow. Our funds are melting rapidly and winter is close upon us. We are devising ways and means of raising money."

"Any definite plans yet, David?"

"No, only in embryo, but I will suggest them to the committee tomorrow."

XI

ELSA'S PHILANTHROPIES

The following day Leila came, but made no mention of the business that brought her. Elsa was not surprised nor did it affect her, for she knew Leila's reticence. But it had increased since they were back in New York, and this was what Elsa could not understand. Neither could she comprehend why Leila should be so much more constrained than before, for she had no conception of the thoughts that so often troubled her friend.

When Mr. Harmon, in his considerate way, made the suggestion that she go abroad with Elsa, Leila had quickly and firmly rejected the offer. It amazed her to such an extent that she failed to grasp the advantages that would open to her, and the only reply that she gave after thanking him, was that she would tell her family and consult with Naomi. Mr. Harmon honored her all the more for her attitude, although Elsa was hurt by the refusal. On her way home, Leila remembered what the music professor had said about "von rich man" who might be willing to further her musical education. Naomi took a common sense view of the proposition, told Leila to accept it as a loan and when she became famous, she could repay him.

For three years she and Elsa occupied the same social position, and the girl lost all self-consciousness. It was different now. Elsa, the daughter of a millionaire and she, the girl who must be a wage-earner, stood on widely divergent planes in their social life, and Leila grew more reserved and self-contained each time they met. If Leila saw Elsa's pain, she gave no sign. Mrs. Harmon understood, told Elsa to be patient and let all things adjust themselves. Thus matters stood on this particular morning which was to be another pleasant mile-stone in Leila's career.

When Mr. Harmon came in, he greeted Leila with a kiss and asked:

"Will you defer business until after luncheon, Leila? I have had a strenuous morning."

Leila acquiesced cheerfully and after the meal was over Mrs. Harmon said:

"If this is to be a 'business meeting' David, you and Leila had better adjourn to your study."

As he made no reply, Leila said:

"It is a business meeting, Mrs. Harmon, but my business can be discussed freely before you all."

"Then let us seat ourselves comfortably in the music-room and Leila can open the meeting." Placing her arm around the young girl's waist, she led the way.

In a low tone, Leila spoke:

"I am willing you should hear my plans, but promise me, dear Mrs. Harmon and you, too, Elsa, that you will not try to dissuade me from what I consider my plain duty at present. Yesterday I received an offer to give lessons on the violin in the New York

Conservatory of Music. I consider it a good offer from a pecuniary standpoint and it may help me in my aspirations to the concert platform. You know we sold our home and have some ready money, more than we require for our needs; besides, the interest on the mortgage we hold is an additional income. Dora and I will live with our aunt who has offered us a home, and after we pay our board and other running expenses, we will still have more money than we require to supply our modest wants. And if Dora is sick, which she often is, Auntie will take care of her. Do you approve of my determination to accept the position, Mr. Harmon?"

"If it is a 'determination,' Leila," said he, "my approval or not is of no consequence."

"Oh, Mr. Harmon, please! I didn't mean that," said the girl. "I would not have you think, at any time in my life, or under any known or unknown conditions, that I would deem your opinion of no consequence. It is of very great consequence. Will you forgive me for expressing myself so poorly that you were misled?"

"You have asked it so prettily, that I surely will, my child. Now let me talk. I certainly object to your teaching in the conservatory; anyway, for the present. Don't interrupt, for I can surmise your objections. The reports from your professors in Germany were so flattering, their absolute certainty of your successful career so convincing, that you dare not lose that prestige by becoming a teacher. By your own words you are convicted. You said you

and Dora have enough capital and interest to satisfy your needs and a little over. This being the case, there is no actual necessity for you to teach."

"Oh, Mr. Harmon, please, won't you let me speak?" she interposed.

"Not yet, dear. Today's actual necessity is that you practice as many hours a day as you can without tiring yourself. If you teach several hours daily, as you must in the conservatory, you will be too tired to practice, for constant teaching is wearing on the body and the nerves."

Leila winced, and murmured:

"Don't I know that bitter truth?"

"Pardon me, dear, I forgot for the moment, and I am sorry. Yet it but strengthens my argument. Promise me you will practice now—later we will talk about your teaching."

"But if I cannot obtain the position later?"

"David," said his wife, "have you something different in view for the child?"

"Yes, I have, and if Leila will be wise enough to conquer her momentary disappointment, I will tell her. Did you really think that after I had watched your advancement with so much pleasure and gratification for the three years you were away from us, that I would lose all interest when you were here?"

"And, Leila," said Mrs. Harmon, "he watched your progress even more closely than Elsa's to prove his faith in your ability and your genius."

"I think that is true. We have been so engrossed in this subject that no one has asked me about the meeting."

A little astonished at the abrupt introduction of a subject seemingly so foreign to the important one upon the tapis, Elsa said:

"Oh, we thought about it, father, but——"

"But you did not want to ask before Leila's business was introduced, nor to interrupt before it was finished. Let me set your curiosity at rest by saying there is much connection between the two."

Leila looked at him questioningly, but remained silent.

"It was a meeting of the directors of a Jewish benevolent order. We must have a large sum of money to continue our benefactions. Our beneficiaries are increasing in numbers, winter is at the door, coal and food are more expensive and we must raise money. A number of men and women are attempting a house to house collection and that will undoubtedly bear fruit. We want to do something further and it was suggested that we endeavor to obtain a theater gratuitously, get the services of some good actors for a little one-act play, and have a concert offering the best talent."

"And," said Elsa with irrepressible mischief, "and Mr. David Harmon made the latter proposition with his own daughter in view."

"And if he did have his daughter in mind, what of it?" said her mother.

"And if he did not have her in mind," said Mr. Harmon, "what then?"

Elsa appeared non-plussed and Leila said:

"Did you possibly have me in mind, Mr. Harmon?"

If so, I shall be most happy to play as many selections as you may desire."

"I anticipated that offer from you, my dear, and I promised I would supply the violin and piano virtuosos. Yes, I called you that, but mentioned no names. Do you see now, Leila, why I do not care for you to teach at present? The most exclusive people will attend the performance, for we shall advertise 'the best talent obtainable.' Then I can convince myself of the calibre of my two girls." His look of affection included them both impartially.

"When will the performance take place?"

"We cannot obtain any large theater in the evening, which means an afternoon production. It will probably take place the day before Thanksgiving."

"I am glad of that," said Elsa, "for Philip will be here then."

A wave of deep color displaced Leila's customary pallor, due solely to her complexion, for she was the embodiment of health. Did the others see it? If so, they pretended blindness, and Mrs. Harmon tactfully asked how the concert would affect the date of the dance.

"Ask our artistes what they think," and as the girls approved, he said, "then this meeting will be adjourned. The concert will be on Wednesday and your dance on Thursday. Girls, you may make your own musical selections. Elsa, you will play alone once, preferably an original composition. Then you will accompany Leila or not, that is optional with her. Your selections, Leila, are also optional, but there must be three, with prepared encores for them all."

The bell announced visitors, and when Ruth and her little two-year old boy entered, all serious conversation was at an end. Ruth had matured since her marriage, had grown matronly and was considered a very handsome woman. Arthur's position in his profession was assured and was most enviable. His clients were the best men in the city and his prosperity and popularity increased. He owned a beautiful home in New Jersey and lived there all year round, to permit the child to grow up with nature. This was, at first, a great disappointment to the grandparents, but they soon realized the wisdom that prompted the action.

Ruth's parents were always overjoyed to see the charming golden-haired, blue-eyed baby who tried so ineffectually to say grandpa and grandma. All he could say was "ampa" and "gamma," which delighted them much more than clear enunciation would have done.

"Ampa, up!" was his command. Stately, dignified Mr. Harmon lifted him, seated him on his shoulder and awaited the second order.

"Ampa, 'or'd 'arch!" came next and "ampa" marched up and down the room with him.

"Ampa yun," and "ampa" ran out of the room and up the stairs. Gleefully rang out the baby laugh, accompanied by a rumbling bass.

The scene was so funny and so novel to Elsa and Leila, that they were unable to repress an echoing laugh, in which the others joined.

"Who would have thought that of father? Won't Philip enjoy it when he comes home? Ruth, **have** you taught him to say 'Uncle Philip' yet?"

"I tried, but unsuccessfully. Arthur made the attempt, but the baby couldn't or would not."

"You had better persist, or Philip will be broken-hearted. You know his devotion to all children and little Arthur is his own family."

"He wrote me recently that because of his love for children, he was considering a course in children's diseases in addition to his specialty of chest-surgery." Then, to Leila:

"Are you practising now as diligently as before?"

"Not quite," replied Leila. She began to speak of her European life very rapidly, differing greatly from her usual deliberate speech. Elsa wondered at it. She did not know Leila was doing her utmost to keep the conversation from drifting back to Philip, lest one of them observe her embarrassment and guess at the cause.

But did she think she could delude the loving mother? Neither could she fathom the unusually affectionate look Mrs. Harmon bestowed upon her as she left the room with Ruth to visit her "baby" upstairs.

When alone, the girls began to talk eagerly as to the music they would select for the concert. It would virtually be their musical *débüt* and it would immediately establish for Leila a reputation in the musical world. This was one of the chief reasons why Mr. Harmon proposed she should play. Many suggestions were offered by both girls and finally the selections were made.

"Leila," said Elsa earnestly, "while thoughts of

music fill our minds, I want to ask your opinion of my project. Neither father nor mother have been told, although my heart is set on carrying out my design. Of what special use is my playing?"

The other girl laughed as she said:

"If I told you it gave pleasure to every one, old or young, who has ever heard your masterly touch and your exquisite expression, would that answer satisfy you?"

"To a certain extent, but the circle is too limited. Father will not allow me to be a professional and I do want an audience different from my friends. What do you think of my playing for the unfortunates in this city, the unfortunates who have so little sunshine in their lives?"

"You mean the poor?"

"Yes, but not exactly in the sense you mean. Some girls and women spend hours in the aid societies, sewing for the poor. Others read to the blind and others pay regular weekly visits to the hospital wards. I want to do these things, but in my own way. If God placed me in a sphere where all my needs are supplied, if He gave me this talent I possess, dare I restrict my efforts to pleasing my friends?"

"Did you get your idea from that picture we saw in the Dresden gallery, the picture of a young musician surrounded by street-waifs, listening to music that could have produced a rain of gold in other surroundings?"

"Partly from that and partly from one other. The painting of Beethoven seated at the piano, playing

his 'Moonlight Sonata' made a deeper impression upon me. We could not see his audience, but we knew the street was crowded with intent listeners, hungry for the music even if not appreciating the artist's genius. Leila, I shall devote as many hours as others set aside for charity work, to playing for the poor whom I can reach. I can sing a little, and where there is no piano I can do that, and I will try to bring some pleasure into the lives of the inmates of the Orphan Asylum and the Montefiore Home and the B'nai B'rith Home and any other place to which my attention is called."

"Elsa, have you considered how often these things will conflict with your social duties? You will go into society, and after your dance, your mail will consist chiefly of invitations. Don't contradict, even if you want to say you will not be a society butterfly. I know you will not, but you will not have time for much benevolent work. Your father will never permit you to do both."

"Nor will I ask him, yet were it a question of neglecting the one for the other, don't you know father and mother well enough——"

"Indeed I do," said Leila warmly. "I know what their answer would be. But why do you not defer your beautiful idea until you have had a couple of years of society?"

"Let me tell you something, Leila. Last Wednesday I went to the meeting of the Auxiliary at the Orphan Asylum. I did not expect to stay long so did not begin to sew. A girl whose bad cold kept her home

from school, showed me around the place. I saw a piano and asked the girl if she could play. She could not, but she said 'some ladies sometimes' came and played for them. 'And do you children like to listen?' I asked. Her enthusiastic 'I love it' and the wistful look in her eyes, led me to tell her I played and would play for her. Her happiness was so touching that on my way home, I drove to the colored Orphan Asylum and asked permission to play for the children. My offer was accepted so gratefully, that my decision to do this work of philanthropy was strengthened to such a degree, that no one can shake it."

"Knowing your temperament, I believe that."

"This plan was formulated more than a year ago and it has grown in intensity. Besides, Philip has always been my standard for everything high and noble and worth while. If he can work as he does each day and as he has been doing for so long, and lead classes and clubs for his less fortunate co-religionists in addition, I too can do something and I mean to do worth-while things and will not fritter away all my hours in dancing and having a gay time."

While she was giving expression to her thoughts so freely, she had not observed the heightened color nor the shining eyes of Leila. Now she saw, and, as she gave her friend a searching glance, the truth dawned upon her.

"Leila, Leila,—oh! I am so happy." She caught her in a fond embrace and kissed her again and again.

"Oh Elsa!" she whispered, "I am so ashamed."

"Ashamed!" echoed Philip's loyal sister.

"Ashamed!" she repeated, "why how could you help loving that boy?"

Again she hugged her while Leila murmured: "Promise faithfully you will not tell." And Elsa promised.

XII

THE BLOW FALLS

Mr. Morton remained in his office later than usual one day in November. It was a dark, rainy day, but the darkness without was as naught in comparison to that in the man's soul. He was fighting the bitter pain that comes into the heart of every parent whose children are a disappointment. Mr. Morton was by nature a good man, a rather observant Jew and a man of much mentality. Soon after his marriage, he realized that all which had passed for cleverness and passable education in his wife, was little more than veneer. What had seemed firmness of character during the courtship, proved to be stubbornness, which developed into immovable obstinacy in a short time. Recognizing the fact that with her unrestrained quick temper she would resent any interference, he followed the easiest course and paid the price of peace by weakly yielding to her demands.

Early on the afternoon in question, a telegram was brought into his office. It was from Richard and contained these words: "Will not be home tonight. Was married this morning." The father was stunned. So that was the culmination of years of a downward course that had brought much misery to his parents!

Whom or what had he married? On what would he support her? Would any decent Jewish girl have married him? That thought caused a painful sting, as the alternative suggested itself. Or,— and he then called upon his Maker:

“Oh, merciful Father in Heaven, did he marry out of the faith? What shall I say to his mother? Poor, poor Betty!”

With head bowed upon his arms on the desk, with bitter thoughts and more bitter denunciations of his own weakness in denying his better judgment as he so often had done, the hours drifted by. A knock at the door and the office boy's question: “Need I stay any longer, sir? It is almost six o'clock,” aroused him. He dismissed the boy, and heavy-hearted, wended his homeward way.

Thoughts of how he should break the news to his wife need not have added to his despair. She had known it since four o'clock and had feared to communicate with him. Richard had written a short letter to his mother and sent it by a messenger who had orders to await an answer. None was sent to the note which read “Dear Mother: I married Polly Hitchcock this morning. I was afraid you and Dad might object, so we stole off quietly to the City Hall and were married by a justice. May I bring Polly home tonight? She will be another daughter to you and I am sure you will love her. Your loving son, Richard.”

The crude manner of announcement, the utter selfishness of the note, the supreme assurance evinced

and the overweening egoism, crushed Mrs. Morton. She rang for her maid, who, upon seeing the suddenly aged features of her mistress and noting the red and swollen eyes, asked with much concern:

"Oh, Mrs. Morton, what has happened? Are you ill? Shall I telephone Mr. Morton to come home?"

"No, Felice, I have had bad news, but it will keep until Mr. Morton returns. Tell the messenger there is no answer, and then come back and help me. The shock has been very great and I am going to bed."

Once there, she alternately sobbed hysterically, or gave way to self-reproach. What would she tell her boy's father? Would he ever forgive her and him? Why, why had she been so indulgent, obstinately and persistently rejecting all advice in controlling the wilful boy?

"Oh," and a low moan of pain betrayed her anguish as another thought took possession of her. "Oh, can this be the punishment for my outspoken opinion, often made in the presence of the children, that I would not object to intermarriage? But Max," involuntarily addressing her absent husband, "how could I dream of an unknown 'Polly Hitchcock' when I meant Maude Melville? Polly Hitchcock! It sounds like an actress. His tastes are low and I wonder if she is one of those common, painted, intolerable burlesquers, whose reputation is as diminutive as her garments! Oh, Max, Max, how can I bear it?"

As if in response to the soul cry, Morton entered the room. He was not shocked to find his wife in bed; that happened frequently. He was still too dazed

to feel anything, but he said as he stooped to kiss her:

"Do you know, too? He might at least have spared you and allowed me to soften the blow for you. What do you know about it?"

She drew the letter from beneath her pillow and handed it to him in silence. After reading it twice, carefully, he folded it and placed it in his pocket.

"Why did you do that, Max?"

"To keep as a perpetual reminder of my laxity in Richard's training. Don't give way, Betty," as she began to sob. "I am at fault equally with you."

"What do you mean to do?" She asked it hesitatingly. All desire to be the dominant factor had disappeared. "Will you take him home?"

"I have had no power to think. My thoughts are as a whirlwind and I am not fit to decide."

Nothing more was said, but, a few hours later, Morton was ringing the door-bell of his neighbor's house. To his great relief, Mr. and Mrs. Harmon were alone. His trouble was so apparent, that Mr. Harmon said:

"Where is your wife? Is she ill?"

"Not physically, but she— we have had a shock—a veritable lightning-bolt from a sky which seemed to have but a slight cloud. Let me be seated."

Ever thoughtful of any one who might require her ministrations, Mrs. Harmon asked if she had better go to Mrs. Morton.

"I thank you, but not tonight. Go tomorrow morning if you like, or maybe she will come here. I knew

she could not have a natural sleep tonight and I administered a sleeping powder before I came over." He sprang up, began to pace the floor and continued:

"Pardon me if I do not remain seated. I think I can speak more easily if I walk."

He told the story to which his hearers listened with varying emotions. His tense nerves relaxed while he was speaking and he seated himself. Mr. Harmon, placing a kindly hand upon his shoulder, said compassionately:

"I need not assure you of our sympathy. Sympathy, however, is not what you need. The deed is accomplished and cannot be undone. If the girl has parents, they are a factor with which we may have to reckon. If the girl is a Catholic, no divorce will ever be granted. If a Protestant, we must await developments. Richard is so nearly of age that the law will scarcely consider him a minor. Your hands are therefore tied."

"But David, is a divorce the only thought in your mind?"

"By no means, Rachel, my dear. I thought it might possibly be in Morton's. Morton, may I talk plainly to you?"

"That is why I came to you. I know your advice will be sane and practical, and I know you cannot possibly reproach me more than I have done since two o'clock. So go ahead."

"You are mistaken, my friend. No thought of reproach entered my mind. You have enough to bear without that. Have you decided upon any action?"

"None. Here is the letter he wrote his mother, but we will not take him home."

Mr. Harmon read the letter and passed it to his wife. Then he said:

"That is a wise decision for the time being. Beyond that I really do not see what you can do. Has Richard a position?"

"I think so, but with his extravagant tastes, it will never suffice for two, and with his customary neglect of his employers' orders, he may lose his place any day."

"Morton, who knows if this marriage may not be the making of the boy? He has been wild and extravagant, uncontrollable and self-sufficient to a degree. If he has married a decent girl and loves her, she may re-create Richard and you may yet be proud of him."

"And you, with your well-defined and well-grounded Jewish faith and tendencies, say nothing in reference to her religion?"

"Any religion whatsoever, if founded on morality, righteousness and sanity, is better than none. Richard has none. She may have had a deeply religious training and her influence upon him may have fine results. Let us wait and see. One thing more, Morton. If you can spare the forenoon tomorrow, come here with your wife, or if you prefer it, telephone in the morning and we will go over to your house. When is Nina coming home?"

"I wish she were here now. It would be better for Betty to have her companionship, even if there is

often much friction between them, as you surely know. Her last letter was from Chicago and told us of so many social engagements until after New Year's, that I doubt if she will break them. Her whole life is centered in society and the 'smart set.' Tomorrow when I write her of our trouble, I will advise her return, though I am doubtful of results. Goodnight, and thank you for all you have said. My burden is lighter."

It was nearly eleven o'clock the following day when the Mortons came. They had been delayed by a visit from Richard, who, receiving no answer from his ever-indulgent mother, had the audacity to go to the house. In a way, it was well, because he relieved their minds of the haunting thought about the character of his wife. Polly was just eighteen and as innocent and unsophisticated as an infant. She had been in the Sacred Heart Convent for ten years, and had been home only a few months. Richard had met her at a church sociable and fell a victim to her naiveness and her charming manner. She had caught his affections on the rebound, for he had become nauseated with the actions of his inamoratas of the underworld.

The young couple surmised their respective parents would not sanction an alliance. They foolishly believed their marriage would be condoned and took the step with as much *insouciance* as children. She had gone to her mother immediately after the ceremony to confess. Her mother's indignation and re-crimination knew no bounds, for her parents had

other designs for Polly, which this runaway marriage shattered. When the mother learned that the young husband was a Jew, her bigotry and prejudice asserted themselves and she exclaimed violently:

"Go to your Jew husband. Leave this house and never return. You are a disgrace to the family. I disown you, and not a rag can you take with you but the clothes on your back. How my child, the only child of devout and religious Catholic parents, could lower herself to the level of a Jew and marry him, is beyond my comprehension. Go, and never let me set eyes on you again."

"What else did Richard say, Morton?"

"He coaxed and cajoled and made a strong appeal to combat our decision, but for once in our lives we were firm. Seeing his dismay, I asked if he had no work. 'No,' he answered. 'When I went to the office this morning they told me I was fired. That's why I came home.'

"And what do you propose to do?" I asked again.

"Won't you take me, father?" he said. "I have only ten dollars, the sum I just received. It won't last long."

"I told him it was pretty late to consider that, but I would try him in the office once more. When he said he knew the salary I would offer would not be sufficient for their needs, I said it would not be a bad idea if his wife would seek some employment."

"Can't we come here to live?" he asked sullenly.

"You cannot," I said. "If I see that you and Polly are earnestly endeavoring to make your own

way in the world, and if I see any improvement in you, my son, I may view this rash marriage differently. All I can say now is that you may come to my office Monday morning. At the end of next week I will tell you what your services are worth to me. It depends entirely upon yourself.' "

Mrs. Morton had not uttered one word during the interview, nor had she done so when Richard was talking to his father. Now she remarked:

"Mrs. Harmon, do you know what thought, besides Richard's escapade, has been with me all morning? A remembrance of the conversation we had the evening after Elsa's unpleasant experience in Miss Gregg's school."

"Do you mean our exchange of opinions on inter-marriage?"

"Yes. I thought I knew so much about it because I had just seen the play 'The Melting Pot,' and because we had discussed it in our club. I forgot to tell you the discussion was conducted solely by non-Jewish women. Maybe I omitted the information purposely. Oh, how many mistakes I have made!"

"We all do that," said Mr. Harmon. "Moreover we are all more or less prone to speak in generalities, forgetting that things assume a different aspect when they are personal."

"That was the case with me when I asserted that I was a firm believer in assimilation. Perhaps I was not sure that I really understood the term wholly, and when my husband spoke of amalgamation, I think I understood less. I am convinced I am rather con-

fused just now as to the exact meaning of the two terms. Mr. Harmon, the melting pot is close to me now, so close that I feel the fires. Tell me how to apply those words to my needs."

"Very willingly, particularly as I have a premonition that Richard will not be recalcitrant for any length of time."

"Why do you think that?"

"Some other time I may explain, if you do not discover it for yourself. 'Assimilation' is the act of becoming similar or identical. That is why I said non-Jews cry for assimilation, hoping our faith will become identical with theirs, thus creating the universal religion they are striving to produce or to obtain. Is that clear to you?"

She nodded affirmation and he proceeded:

"'Amalgamation' has a deeper and broader significance. It means a mixing or blending of races. Do you realize the glorious possibilities for every people under the bright sun of heaven? The result is so far-reaching in its issues, the consequences so immeasurable, that the whole world will be involved. In the eyes of God we are all as one, and we will be as one in the universal brotherhood that will be established by one religion for all humanity. Each creed will yield a bit of dogma until the amalgamation is perfected."

"Ah, but will such a bright day ever dawn?"

"It has been a hope, an anticipation, a vision so long, that the desire has become a belief in the minds of many men, aye, and thinking women too. I said

before, we all speak in generalities, yet I mean to specialize now. Richard has married out of the faith. He had no love for Judaism and his wife, though convent-bred, cannot be much of a Catholic if she married a Jew. You have been kind to Richard despite his grievous fault. Her people have disowned her. If that boy and girl give it any serious thought, will she not be attracted by the faith of a people who are kind and just? And will he not be repelled by the faith that does not soften the hearts of parents and will allow them to ruthlessly cast out an only child? Polly and Richard may not think of it just yet, but some day they will and amalgamation will be the outcome."

"I see your logic, Harmon," interjected Morton, "but I also see the flaw in it. Richard is a Jew and your inference is that Polly may adopt his faith."

"Not necessarily. She may only lose her inherited prejudices and recognize more good in a religion that forgives, than in one that condemns."

"Your point is well taken, and where we are concerned, I hope amalgamation will be consummated."

As they rose to depart, Mrs. Morton said with a sigh:

"Whenever I have been here for a visit I feel my shortcomings keenly. At the same time I am benefitted, as I have been today. You have been most generous in refraining from criticism and unfavorable comment. No wonder the best men and women in the city recognize and admire your character. I thank you for your explanation. The terms are fairly clear."

“Only ‘fairly’? Then be seated again for a few moments and I will illustrate it to your full comprehension. We have all heard of Burbank, the wizard of California, the man who has succeeded in blending seeds or pollen so miraculously, that he has produced plants unknown to the world before. He has taken a seed, or a bit of pollen from an inferior grade of plant and the same from a better grade, and results have shown us what can be done in the production of a higher order of plant.

“An attempt was made to blend the peach and plum into a new kind of fruit, and can anything be more delightful to the palate than the result in the fruit they call nectarine? Nearly half a century ago, in Hawaii, the banana and strawberry were successfully grafted upon one another and the delicate and delicious strawberry-banana was produced.”

“I have read about those things, but did not dream of any further application,” said Morton. “We know that admixture improves the strain of animals, but a higher order of human beings as the result of a mixing and blending of races——”

“Is just as possible,” said his friend, completing the unfinished sentence.

XIII

IN LIGHTER VEIN

The ensuing days were filled with preparations for the entertainment and the dance. Mrs. Harmon declared she would have no distinction in the girls' dresses and as Leila refused to accept hers as a gift, had a simple white gown made for Elsa. Leila had it duplicated by a dressmaker in the house. The car was to call for Leila and when the chauffeur alighted, he carried a box which contained a corsage bouquet of rare orchids.

Leila's soft and clinging gown, cut modestly low, with tiny sleeves that displayed her rounded snow-white arms, was greatly enhanced by the delicately shaded flowers. She wore but one jewel, a costly pearl and diamond butterfly brooch, a birthday gift from her benefactor. The pin was coquettishly fastened in her hair, hair which was longer and thicker than of yore and was wound around her head like a coronet. Leila was so beautiful in face and form, that no gown and no jewels could add to her personal charm.

Elsa awaited her in the dressing-room of the theater. She, too, was a handsome girl and her pale golden hair set off her fair complexion. Her gown

was like Leila's, but her throat was encircled by a short rope of pearls, and her flowers were American Beauties. She was taller than Leila, had a fine figure and a dignified bearing. Each girl had her own personal attractions and nothing ever clashed.

Mr. Harmon entered, looked lovingly at the two girls, and remarked:

"If I told you what I think of your looks, you would be filled with enough self-admiration to detract from your musical efforts this afternoon."

"They are not 'efforts', father mine," laughed Elsa. "If music were not the natural outpouring of our souls, you would not have suggested our names for your program. But you need not compliment us. We have forestalled that. You see we are often a 'mutual admiration' society and this time we have not been able to criticise. Ordinarily, we are our own severest critics."

"I am pleased to know of your mutual admiration, but am more pleased to tell you the theater is crowded to an extent that would alarm a fire inspector. At the box office, people by the score are refused admission. We will realize a fine sum of money to replenish our dwindling funds. Good bye, girlyes, do your best." With a kiss for each, he left them.

An audience composed of representative men and women, non-Jews and Jews, had gathered and filled the house to its utmost capacity. A small note on the first page of the program awakened a buzz of comment and aroused curiosity. The note read: "Leila Netter, an artiste of remarkable genius, is well known

in musical circles in Leipsic and Berlin. Upon this, her first appearance in America, she has offered her services gratuitously. All the performers have done likewise, thereby sustaining their reputation for philanthropy. We thank them one and all, for contributing to the success of the entertainment we are offering."

"Who was Leila Netter?" "Elsa Harmon must be the daughter of the capitalist." "She was abroad several years, I was told." "Possibly she met the violinist there." These and similar conjectures passed from mouth to mouth and curiosity grew apace. The third number on the program announced the appearance of the two girls. A hush of expectation fell upon the vast audience, which was broken by a storm of applause at sight of their beauty and grace. This in itself was an incentive and never had they played so well nor with such credit to themselves.

It had been a disappointment to Elsa when she learned that Philip would not be in the city until the following day. All unknown to her, he and his friend arrived during the opening number of the program. The golden key of his father's name admitted them at once and chairs were brought into his father's box. When Elsa and Leila made their appearance, a wave of mingled astonishment, joy and love, overcame Philip.

"Could three and a half years have brought such a change in a girl?" he whispered to himself. Could that beautiful, graceful creature be his Leila? How unconscious of self she was! How absorbed in the

divine melodies she brought into life! And her hair, that indescribable hair! His friend rudely awakened him from his dreaming, by saying as he clapped his hands furiously:

"Are you asleep, Phil? Why don't you applaud? They are great artists. Your sister is a beauty."

Philip laughed at his friend's idea of beauty. Elsa was pretty, of course, but, loving brother though he was, his sister could not compare with the only girl whose memory had never left him. Leila was beautiful.

The success of the performance, judging by the net sum of more than fourteen hundred dollars, was unquestioned. The success of the performers, all prominent in their profession, was great, but the two friends carried off all the honors and most of the flowers. Philip and his companion took advantage of the intermission to hasten to the nearest florist. Regardless of the exorbitant prices asked, they bought the choicest blossoms and in such quantities, that the girls were unable to carry them all. Philip's intention was to go behind the scenes to "visit Elsa," as he told his mother, but she positively forbade it, fearing the effect upon Leila's music. His patience was taxed to the utmost to "wait until dinner," but he did not demur.

Leila did not wish to go home with her friends, but could not refuse their insistent and united pleadings. Mrs. Harmon had told Philip to wait until the family had assembled in the dining-room, in order to make the surprise more complete. Her plan appealed

to her son. After assuring himself they were all there, he parted the portières and entered, followed by his friend. Elsa flew across the room, embracing Philip warmly.

"Philip, Philip! What a surprise. Were you——" She stopped abruptly at sight of the distinguished looking man behind Philip and stared at him in mute astonishment.

"Elsa, this is Doctor Getz, my friend. Doctor, let me present my sister."

During the introduction, she had time to collect her scattered wits. She gave the doctor a bright smile and said with her customary frankness:

"I am very glad to meet Philip's friend. Pardon my rude stare. You must know that all we have heard about you, and there was something in nearly every letter, was couched in the terms 'my friend' and 'Will,' consequently we concluded you were about Philip's age. Does that explain my astonishment to hear you introduced as 'Doctor' and to see a man of your dignity, when I expected to see a boy? Let me present you to Leila, as Philip is engrossed in renewing old acquaintance."

Dinner, always a cheerful meal in this home of harmony and congeniality, was particularly so on this evening, and it was followed by pleasant talk for half an hour. Then Leila, declining to remain all night, rose to go. While Mr. Harmon aided her in adjusting her wraps, Philip whispered:

"Mother, may I escort her home? I mean in the car. I can be back soon. You can spare me and,"

glancing at his friend in animated conversation with Elsa, "and Will won't even miss me."

"Yes, but you must not expect an invitation to go into the house with her and do not accept it if perchance you get it."

Philip's heart beat fast as he seated himself beside Leila in the warm and well-lighted limousine. The girl looked tired and he asked if the glare of the light was too much for her.

"Not at all," she said in a tone that startled him by its constraint.

"Has the day exhausted your strength?"

"Not at all," was her reply.

Had he but known the riotous thoughts that were tumbling over each other in Leila's breast, that sent the blood surging through her veins and whose intensity equalled his own, he would have desisted from all conversation. In his lack of self appreciation he ascribed her halting answers to weariness, or the inertia that follows exhilaration. And Leila, poor girl, had so strenuously endeavored to conceal her joy at seeing him so unexpectedly, that she was in no condition to speak at all. She was happy to have him with her, yet miserable in her efforts not to betray herself. Fortunately for both, the ride was a short one and as they approached her aunt's home, Philip said:

"Miss Netter, I have only a short vacation, but I want to see you again before I leave the city. May I call on you?"

"Have you forgotten Elsa's dance tomorrow night?"

"No, but can't I see you before then?"

At that she laughed gaily and said it would be impossible.

"Twenty-four long hours," was his mournful reply, as the car stopped.

He helped her to alight, escorted her to the door and as she disappeared, he remarked with genuine boyish chagrin:

"She might have let me come here tomorrow."

Before Philip reached his home, his parents had left Elsa and Doctor Getz alone. In their own room, they began to discuss the events of the day and were as delighted with the enthusiastic admiration Leila had evoked as if she were their own child.

"After I parted from them in the dressing room," said Mr. Harmon, "I met"—and he mentioned the names of two prominent patrons in musical circles. "They were unanimous in their commendation of Leila. One of them asked me unreservedly, whether I thought she could be persuaded to play on special occasions for the Philharmonic Society. He named a figure which will startle the child. I promised to negotiate the matter if possible, and I think it is."

"David, have you ever looked beyond the immediate future of these young people around us? They are no longer children. I am thinking of Philip just now."

"No further ahead than to send him abroad after he graduates. He wants to go and I have agreed to it."

"Perhaps he wanted to go once," she said meaningly.

"What could possibly change his plan? Philip is not one to be swayed by trifles."

"Would you call a dear girl a 'trifle'? David, Philip is a man now, with a man's hopes, entirely distinct from his ambitions."

"A girl?" echoed the father, ignoring the other remark. "A girl? Has he confided in you? A girl, why, he neither knows nor cares for girls."

"But, David dear, I did not say 'girls'. One girl is an entirely different matter."

"Oh Rachel, you know he would allow no girl to ruin his career. Don't be tantalizing. To my knowledge he does not know even one girl."

"What is Leila, if not a girl?" asked she.

"Leila!" and his well-modulated voice was almost a shout. "Leila! tell me Rachel, is that a joke?"

"Why, David! I know men are proverbially blind when Cupid is busy, but I cannot conceive your knowing and loving that girl as you and I do, and being so overcome at the suggestion that our boy has the same love for her, only intensified. I am overjoyed at the thought and I think Leila cares for him, too."

When readjustment had taken place in the mind of Mr. Harmon, he said:

"It is strange that I had no suspicion of the truth. Like you, I am happy in the thought of calling her my daughter in fact. She has been that in my heart for many years."

Philip's rapid footsteps on the stairs ended the conversation.

"You are both so quiet that it looks suspicious. I

have an impression I have interrupted an interesting argument here, and I am sure I did down stairs. You all make me feel like the little child of whom the song says: 'Always in the way', and his deep baritone voice filled the room with the pathetic words and the sweet melody.

"Never in our way, my boy," said his father. "It is good to have you home if only for a few hours. These little visits are so pleasant and they make us dread the time when you will be in Europe. From there one does not often take flying trips."

A slight shadow crossed Philip's mobile features, noted by the astute mother and this time by the father who was watching him intently. There was a short silence, broken by Mrs. Harmon.

"In view of the years you anticipated a finishing course in medicine in European universities, you are strangely quiet, my boy."

"Mother—and father, too, will you be disappointed or grieved to know I do not care to go? Listen to me. After my graduation, I can get all the hospital practice I require and can be appointed interne afterward. With opportunities in the wards and in the clinics, every avenue to study all diseases will be opened to me. Doctor Getz did not study abroad and he ranks high in the profession."

"But the 'prestige of study abroad' will be wanting."

"I cannot object when you quote my own words. Shall we say I was foolish to utter them, or that a high aim keeps me here?"

"A girl?" questioned his mother mischievously.

Philip's color rose as he answered in a low tone, which grew reverential as he proceeded.

"A girl today, mother, but my wife some day, if God aids me in my endeavors and intentions."

Her handsome son, fully six feet tall and splendidly proportioned, threw his arms about his idolized mother, lifted her from her low chair and seating himself, placed her on his knee.

"You used to take little Philip in your lap when you wanted him to give you his confidence, now you must sit in mine to hear my confession. And father, you must hear it too. I love Leila, have loved her from the day I first saw her, though I did not recognize the feeling. No other girl has ever interested me for one moment."

"You loved her, but you only recognized the 'wonderful hair,'" said his mother, as she walked back to her seat near her husband.

"Yes. Her hair wound itself in and out of every fiber of my being, until it reached and enmeshed my heart. It and its owner have been there ever since, and she has been the guiding star of my life. You two love her as Leila; will you accept her as a daughter?"

"Foolish boy! Nothing would give us more happiness, except to see Elsa married to a man worthy of her."

"If I can judge by appearances, the one man I deem 'worthy of her' is making marked progress downstairs."

"For a boy, you are observant," said his father.

"I do not wish to chill your hopes, but have you spoken to Leila?"

"Tonight has been the only time I have been alone with her. She was too tired to talk much and when I asked if she would allow me to call on her tomorrow, she laughingly refused, saying she would be here in the evening for the dance."

"Philip, it is late. You had better tell your friend it is time to retire."

"If I don't, and he happens to be riding one of his special hobbies, he will continue to talk until morning. Goodnight; I will send Elsa up." He kissed them affectionately and left the room.

Soon Elsa came in, her eyes sparkling and her usually pale cheeks a rosy red. Ingenuously as a child she exclaimed:

"Mother, you must have a long talk with Doctor Getz tomorrow. He is a splendid gentleman."

"Philip thinks so and as obedient parents, father and I must 'fall into line'." She laughed merrily as she noted Elsa's pretty blush.

"I know you will want to, after you have conversed with him a little while. I wonder what attracted him to Philip, who is such a boy by comparison. Mumsy, you look tired and I am sure I am, so goodnight to you both." After the customary salutations, she left them. In the hall she met Philip, just as he had closed the door of the room which had been assigned to Doctor Getz.

"You horrid boy!" she ejaculated. "Why did you let us think your 'Will Getz' is a boy? Why didn't you tell us he is a man?"

"And why didn't you tell me Leila is an——?" He left the word unspoken.

"An angel?" scoffed Elsa, all undaunted. "She is not an angel, she is just a girl, but your 'Will Getz' is a man."

"What do you think of him anyway?"

"I am proud of your ability to select friends." With a kiss, the brother and sister separated.

From their own room, the parents overheard the conversation. With a sigh Mrs. Harmon said:

"Our children are gone. Too soon we will be alone." A sob escaped her, as she was caught in her husband's embrace. He stroked her hair gently.

"'Thus it is our children leave us,'" he quoted. "If these indications become realities, we will not lose our children, but we will gain two who are most desirable. Nor will we be left alone, as you so mournfully remarked. In our home we have sufficient space to welcome them all. So drive sad thoughts away, dear, and think of the happiness of the children."

XIV

GATHERING THE THREADS

Lights gleamed from every window in the Harmon mansion the night of the dance. An unbroken line of automobiles drew up to the entrance, happy young men and girls alighted and entering the spacious doorway, mounted the broad staircase. The house resembled a tropical garden abloom with rare exotic flowers. Concealed colored musicians alternately played and sung their plaintive Southern melodies, followed later by an orchestra which played the dance music.

To insure informality, only Elsa and Philip received the guests as they trooped down the stairway to the grand salon. Mr. and Mrs. Harmon, Leila and Doctor Getz stood near, and watched the animated procession with unconcealed pleasure. Few introductions were necessary, as the gathering was a reunion of Elsa's acquaintances. The buzz of conversation mingling with happy laughter ceased when Philip entered with Leila and Doctor Getz. These two were strangers and presentations followed quickly. Dancing cards were distributed and much pleasurable excitement ensued as the young men flitted from one girl to another to secure coveted dances.

Leila had arrived before dinner and she and Philip had a happy hour together, the while Elsa and her mother accompanied by the doctor, made their final tour of inspection. Philip, with some cards in his hand, said:

"Miss Netter, I captured two of these cards for Elsa and Doctor Getz, the other two for you and me. How many times would you like my autograph to appear on yours?"

"Once, Mr. Harmon, is considered ample by every autograph fiend," she replied demurely, though her heart beat rapidly.

"Once?" he queried. "Do you mean I may have but one dance? You cannot be so cruel."

"Will you be content with two?" she asked, while wishing with her whole heart she could give him all.

Boldly he replied: "I would try to be content with all, but even then I would wish for more, as did Oliver Twist."

"Possibly after one dance you might revoke that wish. I may prove to be a poor partner."

"One has but to see your light, graceful walk to obtain an idea of your dancing." With a deep sigh, he continued:

"I will take two, then, and hereby offer myself as your supper escort. Is that satisfactory?"

She nodded acquiescence, lest her voice betray her pleasure.

A similar scene was enacted by the other couple when Philip brought the cards to them, which ended in the same way. Consequently both Philip and his

friend having had their dances assured with the girls of their choice, did their duty bravely by the others. Many bright eyes rested admiringly upon Philip and many a pulse quickened when he asked for a dance, for he was by far the handsomest man present, although opinion was fairly divided between him and his friend.

During the second dance with Leila, Philip asked if she would like to rest a little while. She consented and he led her into the library where the subdued lights invited confidence.

"Miss Netter, I was disappointed that you refused to permit me to call on you today. Tomorrow I must go back to Baltimore for special work. It is uncertain if I will be here for the Christmas holidays, as my duties may prevent. I may not have another opportunity, so let me ask you now" and he drew his chair closer to hers. "Will you allow me to write to you?"

Hesitatingly she replied: "If it will give you any pleasure."

"It will indeed. And will you answer my letters? Yours will lighten many a depressing hour in a hospital ward, or at the bedside of some hopeless case where I am waiting for the inevitable end. Please say you will. I see much misery in the pursuit of my chosen profession."

"If my letters perchance will bring you good cheer, I will be happy to write to you." It would be difficult to say who of the twain was happier as they returned to the ball-room.

Later in the evening, Mr. and Mrs. Morton came in to watch the dancing. Mrs. Harmon, quick to observe her sad and careworn expression, said:

"I do wish you would come over oftener. You might not then miss Nina so much. When did you hear from her?"

"Today. In answer to our letter after Richard's marriage, she wired she could not break her many engagements. Afterwards she wrote she was sorry I was alone and would try to be back on Thanksgiving. Today her letter informed us she would come the end of next month." Tears came into her eyes and her voice faltered as she proceeded:

"My punishment comes through both my children. First Richard and now Nina. No, don't start. She is not married. She wrote as she might have written to a stranger, that she is engaged to a Frank Stein, a successful merchant in Chicago, that they will be married in June, and don't I think her trousseau can be completed if she begins her shopping directly after the holidays."

The heart of the more fortunate mother felt a sudden twinge of pain. Pity shone from her expressive eyes, but her lips formed no word. Pressing the other's hand, she said:

"I know how you must feel, but at least you know she is happy."

"Yet do you not see the unmitigated selfishness that crops out in every word and between all the lines of her letter? Her absolute indifference to our feelings, indicates a heart as cold towards us as is Richard's."

"Don't cherish such thoughts, my poor friend. The day may come when she will learn to prize her mother. Then you will forget all this pain." In a different tone she added:

"Will you come to the supper room and see our arrangements there? Beckon to your husband and follow me."

Mr. Harmon joined them there, and said:

"Morton, how does Richard behave?"

"Although he does not seem to realize the serious aspects of his rash marriage, he has grown more steady and often astonishes me by his reference to the office men. He says 'Polly talks and talks and talks' to him and I believe him. The plucky girl answered an advertisement recently. The reply was satisfactory, inasmuch as the salary offered was twelve dollars a week. Her ability to fill the post was ascertained by a competitive examination and her marks being highest, she was employed by the firm. I think it hurts him to see her compelled to work and I have more hope for his future than ever before."

"I am glad of it. Have you seen Polly at all?"

"Yes. We invited them to dine with us one evening and found her so amiable that it will not be difficult to love her. But I cannot overcome my objection to her religion."

"Can she have much religion if she married a Jew?"

"She had, but I think Catholicism is losing its hold on her. She said she had given up attending mass the first Sunday after I had reinstated Richard in my business. She has not gone to church since."

"Did she say why not?"

"I asked her," said Mrs. Morton, "and she replied naively: 'My mother was always a devout Catholic, but if her religion taught her harshness and unforgiveness, I will have nothing more to do with it.'"

"Do you not see if she has no religion of her own, she may eventually embrace Judaism? This is the hope I held out to you. She will not make a Catholic of Richard."

The martial strains of a popular military march were heard and led by Elsa and Doctor Getz, the gay company approached.

To enable Doctor Getz to speak freely to her mother, Elsa left them together after luncheon the following day, and both were pleased to become better acquainted.

"Doctor," began Mrs. Harmon, "did Elsa tell you of our astonishment that you are not a boy?"

"Yes, and her frank admission evoked my admiration and I explained our friendship to her, as I would like to do again to you, if you are interested."

"Nothing in the world concerning her boy, can fail to interest his mother."

"Just what my mother might have answered," he replied. "No doubt you are wondering at such an intimacy between a man of thirty-two and a boy like your Philip. Mrs. Harmon, could you see Philip as his associates do, you would understand. Philip is a boy only at home, or when alone with me. In the university he is as settled and sedate as a man of forty. In the dissecting room, assisting at an opera-

tion, working in the wards of a hospital, attending charity patients in their homes, or listening to lectures, Philip is a grave and serious man. I predict a great future for him. His earnestness of purpose, his assiduity to work have gained for him the respect and admiration of professors and students, and not one of the latter would mention things unclean to him, nor would the boldest dare invite him to one of their orgies."

The mother's eyes shone with tears of happiness and gratitude, but she only smiled, as her heart was too full for speech.

"Mrs. Harmon, when I watched the boy and recognized his sterling worth and his ability to resist the temptations that beset the path of young, rich and handsome students, I loved him and often sought him in his room. Naturally he was flattered by the attention of an older man and our warm friendship followed."

"Philip said you have been a practising physician."

"I have been that for eight years, but I wished to specialize. I transferred my practice to a friend and went to Johns Hopkins University to take the special course I required. In June I shall receive my diploma, after which I hope to locate in some large city. My specialty will be children's diseases, specifically, surgical cases."

Soon after this conversation, Philip and Doctor Getz returned to Baltimore. Before they left, Elsa had promised to correspond with the doctor who had fascinated not only Philip, but each member of the family.

A spirit of sadness brooded upon the Morton home. Nina had married and lived in Chicago. Mrs. Morton had lost all ambition for classes and clubs, substituting the Sisterhood work, the Sewing Society and the Temple. Her disappointment in her children had a tendency to embitter her outlook on all mankind, but the counteracting, sweet influence of Mrs. Harmon changed her attitude, and she learned to bear her burden bravely if not cheerfully. A new interest entered her life when Mr. Morton said one evening:

"Betty, I am sure you will be pleased to hear good news of Richard. He has changed in all respects, and is now as reliable as he once was irresponsible. I have always credited Polly with the change, and today he admitted it. We really know very little about Polly, seeing her as we do but once a week at dinner for an hour or so."

"If Polly has succeeded in making Richard reliable and steady, we owe her much. But——"

"But what?" As there was no reply he continued:

"We are lonesome Betty, you and I, alone in this great establishment. Shall I tell Richard that he and Polly may come home to live with us?"

"Max, dear, I am glad you spoke of this. It has been in my thoughts often. If Richard is different, if he has cast aside his evil habits and is steady, we owe it to the girl he married. Yet, will they be happier here? And if they are, will it be better for them? At present they are paying their own way, but if they are here where everything is provided for them, will there not be danger of Richard's back-sliding?"

"Betty, I have never known you to express a saner thought."

"Don't, Max, it hurts. My bitter experiences have made me recognize my former worthlessness and the shallowness of all my petty pretensions. I am trying to cultivate judgment now."

"And succeeding, as your questions betoken. At present, it is too late to consider the backsliding, or the degeneration of Richard. We must hope his perfect regeneration is accomplished. I spoke to him most seriously this afternoon and I have decided we must bring them here."

"I see no 'must.' There is no obligation on our part."

"Perhaps there is." Lowering his voice and looking at her steadily, he said in a low and impressive tone:

"In a few months, if all goes well, there will be a little one who will be taught to call you 'Grandma'."

All the hunger of the cheated mother-heart within her was visible in her eyes as she said softly:

"Then there is no question. You and I would be wicked if we allowed that young thing to go to work and to ride up and down town in crowded subways, often standing all the way. Max, tell Richard tomorrow, to come home with his wife."

When Leila went home the morning after the dance, she found her aunt and Dora in a state of excitement unusual to those two self-contained women. It was the day on which they unfailingly received the weekly letter from Fanny.

"Have you heard from Fanny?" asked Leila after she had answered the many questions they asked. "Did she say when she and the children will come?" This thought was uppermost in the mind of each of them, when the letter with the foreign postmark was delivered.

"Here is her letter. You can read what she says. Read it aloud, as, in our agitation, we may have overlooked something."

The following extract is of interest to the reader: "As to my visit, will you be greatly disappointed if you hear it must again be deferred? Little Naomi has been very ill and the doctor fears the variable climate of New York will be detrimental. Besides, Bernard has neuritis so badly in his right wrist, that he is dependent on my assistance in the office as much as at home. The good man knows how badly you will feel—he judges by my own keen disappointment. Yesterday he gave me the enclosed draft, remarking in his simple, quiet way: 'Enclose that in your letter tomorrow. Tell Dora to come and visit us. Say I would have invited Leila too, but I know she will not give up her career now. Possibly in the future, when she is famous, she may tour South America and will deem Buenos Ayres intelligent and musical enough to appreciate her genius. Then we will entertain her.' You all know his way of joking. But, Dora dear, we want you. Make your preparations and come soon."

"Dora! how splendid. I am overjoyed for you. Maybe the long ocean voyage and the radical change

of climate, will make you strong and well. You will go, won't you?" Then, remembering that she herself would be left virtually alone, for the old aunt was neither companion nor advisor, she added weakly:

"You must go, dear. Fanny wants you."

"And you, Leila? Were it not for you, I would not hesitate."

"Don't think of me," she said bravely. "I am no longer a baby—yes, I am," she added bursting into tears. Throwing her arms about her devoted sister, she sobbed: "Yes, I am. I am still your baby Leila."

When the emotional storm had passed they began discussing the situation. The draft was generous, more than enough to provide traveling expenses and the trousseau. With the surplus, Dora would be able to procure a handsome gift for all the dear ones in Buenos Ayres. This in itself gave her much satisfaction. An additional pleasure was in store for her on the day the steamer sailed. The Harmon family called for her and as they were riding to the pier, Mr. Harmon drew some papers from his pocket.

"Dora, I want to tell you first. These are contracts from musical directors, for Leila. They cover an entire year, with renewals if she so desires. They only await your signature, dear." Without any further comment, he passed them to Leila.

Varying emotions surged through the girl's heart and brain as she took Mr. Harmon's hand and pressed it. When she could command her voice, she used the fewest words possible.

"You know how grateful I am, dear, good friend;"

and Mr. Harmon was fully repaid, for he preferred simplicity of expression.

"Mr. Harmon," said Dora, "now I can enjoy this trip and my visit without any qualm of conscience. I knew Leila would miss me very much, until she had some interest to fill her mind and occupy her time. Now that she will be kept busy, she will be happy in her work as I will in my play."

"Do not fret about our girl," said Mrs. Harmon as she kissed Dora at parting from her. "We will have her with us in all her spare hours, for we love her, too."

XV

HOPES FULFILLED

On New Year's day, Leila received a letter from Philip which came by special delivery. With the early morning mail she had received her customary daily greeting and a box of rare flowers. The special letter awakened much shy curiosity as to its contents.

Thursday, 12.02 A. M., January 1st, 19—

“‘My Leila’ are the words that are always singing in my heart, throbbing in my brain. At the dawn of the New Year, I must write them to you even at the risk of your displeasure, for ‘my Leila’ you are and ever will be. The bells and horns are ushering in the New Year with time-honored noise and confusion. All the world is happy or pretending joy. But the commotion is as naught to me through the hushed awe that fills my soul. You are near me in spirit tonight, so near that I almost think I can fold you in a loving embrace.

“Leila, my heart overflows in gratitude to God for many things, but most of all that He brought you into my life. My heart is too full to write more than two short questions, short, as language goes but wide as the universe in hope. Leila, dear, will you accept me with all my faults for your New Year's

gift? And will you send me, as my New Year's gift, a gift I have longed to possess for many years, the gift of your precious love—your more precious self? God bless you, my love, my all.

PHILIP."

Leila's quiet happiness was almost sublime in its intensity. The few words she was able to write, brought delirious happiness to her lover. A telegram from him announced the glad tidings to his family and soon thereafter, Elsa and her parents went to visit Leila, each more eager than the other, to kiss and caress her. No demurring nor protestations were permitted as they insisted upon her accompanying them home.

"If you are Philip's bride, you belong to us also and we must have you with us today."

Later, Leila understood why, when without any ceremony on his part or surprise on theirs, Philip bounded into the room and caught her in an embrace such as only the first pure love of a virile, clean young man can encompass. Quietly disappearing, the others left them together.

Philip gently placed one hand under her chin, lifted the blushing face and pressed a hallowed kiss upon her lips. It was a double virgin kiss, for with the exception of Elsa and his mother, his lips had never touched those of any woman. Then the beloved hair which had been his fetish so many years, was covered with his half-reverent, half-passionate kisses.

As she strove to disengage herself from his embrace, he whispered:

"Don't, my darling. You cannot realize how often I have dreamed of your wonderful hair and how I have hungered to touch and caress it. Now that you have accorded me the right, you must not deny the privilege. Ask mother to tell you what I said to her years ago."

"You told your mother you loved my hair?"

"Yes, and our wise little mother knew it long before I told her."

Leila laughed in sheer, happy abandon, and said:

"She must have supernatural powers and I am constantly learning how much she intuitively knows. No one can fathom the depth of my feelings for your parents, and had they not become interested in the embryo little teacher, I would have never known the joy you have brought to me. Oh, Philip!—" and her mouth was closed by his fervent kisses.

When Leila freed herself and lifted a rosy countenance from Philip's shoulder, she said diffidently:

"Shall we not go to your parents and have them share our happiness?"

"Yes," said Philip. "They are in the next room." As they entered, Mrs. Harmon rose to meet them, and Leila said:

"Why didn't you tell me Philip was coming, Mrs. Harmon?"

Clasping the radiant girl in her embrace, the mother said:

"No more 'Mrs. Harmon,' dear. You have said it for the last time. Hereafter you are my daughter, as close to me as are my own children. We have

always loved the chosen friend of Elsa, so it is not difficult to look upon you as Philip's bride and as our own child. Now go to father who can scarcely wait to give you the kiss I know you want."

"Father!" murmured the girl. "I scarcely remember mine, but in my heart you have taken his vacant place. Dear father Harmon."

"Our own little girl forevermore," said Philip's father as he kissed her lovingly.

Thus was Leila welcomed by her lover's family. In the general felicitations, none but the observant mother thought of Elsa. A smile of satisfaction rested on her lips, as she saw her own girl surreptitiously lift a violet from her corsage bouquet and kiss it. That morning a box of violets had been sent by Doctor Getz.

An important operation necessitated Philip's return to Baltimore in two days. Before his time expired he asked Leila to take him to see Naomi. The request startled her, yet with keen perception she understood and asked no questions. On their way he said:

"You did not ask why I want to meet Naomi, but I have sometimes thought it possible that some joyous shock might restore her mind."

"I do not wish to discourage you, dear," said Leila, "yet we are all convinced that it will never be. No," as he attempted to interrupt her. "No, I am not a pessimist. With Naomi——"

"I know all you would say, my Leila, but even if

that brilliant mind be clouded for all time, I want to meet your sister. Does she ever seem pleased with your visits?"

"If so, she does not show it. She permits my kiss, thanks me for any little gift I bring her and often takes a childish delight in some trifle. Yet, when I rise to leave her she feels no regret, nor does she invite me to come again. No one can conceive how dearly she loved her baby Leila and now——." Her eyes filled with tears and, boyishly impulsive, he squeezed her arm and whispered:

"I would show you that I 'can conceive' what her love for my Leila was, if I were not afraid of the chauffeur."

Her tears were dried quickly by the magic of a happy laugh.

All came to pass as Leila had said, and even the costly flowers Philip brought Naomi were laid aside without comment. She asked indifferently:

"Who is this man?" and without thought or knowledge that Leila had introduced him as her future husband, and that she herself had asked a question, answered it by adding:

"Oh, yes, he is another doctor. I don't need any doctors. Nothing is the matter with me. And I am tired of seeing doctors, doctors all the time."

"Do the doctors bother you?" asked Philip gently.

Completely ignoring him and gazing directly before her she continued:

"I am contented here. The nurses are good, and any time I want to go shopping some one goes with

me. But I don't like company and I don't like doctors. Leila, why won't you tell them not to come here?"

Now Naomi looked at Philip. The light of insanity was in her eyes, and he, too moved to trust his voice, turned toward the door. He had clearly seen the darkened mind through the windows of her soul and knew her case to be hopeless. Moreover, he saw that her vitality was such that she could live into her dotage unless she were stricken by a fatal disease. He looked at her again when Leila kissed her goodby and he saw how apathetic was the answering kiss.

Leila wept when the heavy doors were locked behind them, and sobbed:

"It is like a funeral each time I see her. Dora told me not to come often, saying it gave Naomi no pleasure and it saddened me too much. But there is no one else to come and though it hurts unspeakably, I shall not neglect my monthly visits."

"I will not try to dissuade you from your affectionate mission, my girlie, but I want you to understand this. Naomi knows she is in a retreat of some kind, yet she is contented and even cares for her nurses. One can not tell the devious workings of unbalanced minds, yet I am convinced she has not a momentary regret in connection with the past. She probably knows no past."

"That is true, as far as I can judge. I brought my violin once and played for her. She listened to one short selection rather impatiently, then said abruptly:

“‘Don’t bring that thing any more. I hate music.’ And when I think how much she loved it and how she unbalanced her brilliant mind to give me musical advantages——”

“You must not think that, Leila. With her temperament, she would have elaborated some other project for which to overwork herself. From all I know of her from mother and Elsa and you, her expenditure of energy and nerve force could not have been surpassed. That you were the subject or object she selected to be benefitted by her labors of love, was not your fault. Had it not been you, she would have sacrificed herself for some one else. I am glad we are near home, for I want you and Elsa to play for me.”

“In order to make me forget? Music has always done that for me, and now I will have other cherished thoughts besides.”

In exuberant happiness, he lifted her bodily from the car to the ground, and as they entered the shadowy vestibule of the house, he caught her in a loving embrace.

* * * * *

Five years have been added to the flight of time, five years bringing many changes in their course. In Ruth’s household, a little dark-eyed girl has been young Arthur’s playmate for three years. Elsa is a charming matron now, the happy wife of Doctor Getz, with a little Philip of her “very own” as she says. Leila had a brilliant career, playing before enthusiastic musical assemblages for three successive seasons,

then, at Philip's urgent and insistent persuasions retired into private life, with a select audience of one. Motherly Mrs. Harmon would not be separated from her children and the two younger couples remained in the house where there was a welcome for all.

The home of the Mortons was also brightened by the presence of young people. Polly was devoted to her parents-in-law, and was an unfailingly cheerful companion for Mrs. Morton. The latter often longed for the selfish daughter who rarely wrote to her, and who seldom stopped long in New York on her various trips to seaside resorts or to Europe. Nina had no children and had married a man who was as superficial as she. He had ample means, and "society" filled their existence.

Mrs. Morton loved Polly, and a few days after the little one had arrived, the young mother gave the strongest evidence of her love for Richard's parents. Mrs. Morton was seated at Polly's bedside, holding the sturdy little boy and gazing at him in silent adoration, when Polly said:

"Mother, if it will afford you and father any pleasure to have our baby raised in the Jewish faith, I give my consent."

"Polly, Polly!" exclaimed Mrs. Morton in a choked voice. "Polly do you mean——?"

"Mother, I mean it with all my heart. Once I knew little about Jews and cared less. My own mother, a true believer in God and in the Trinity, was my ideal of a good and religious woman. My one offense was my marriage to a Jew and she pun-

ished me by disowning her only child. Your son married a Christian, and his offense against the faith of his ancestors was equal to mine, yet you forgave Richard."

"And why not? We loved Richard, and your influence has made a good man out of a heedless, selfish boy."

"I thought my parents loved me, too, but they did not and do not, as they will not forgive me. Mother, I want my boy to grow up in an atmosphere of love and forgiveness, and I want you to know your grandchild will be a Jew."

"Polly, my child, if we have been better and kinder to you than you expected, this act of yours compensates for all we have done or ever can do. When father hears it——"

"Father did hear it," said Mr. Morton in an unsteady voice and with moist eyes, as he entered the room. He bent over the little mother, pressed an affectionate kiss upon her brow and whispered:

"I cannot express my emotions, little daughter. God bless you and your baby."

"And don't forget Richard, Daddy mine," said Polly.

* * * * *

An extraordinary and delicate chest-operation had taken place in the Bellevue Hospital. Philip was the attendant surgeon, and Dr. Getz, who had been the consulting physician, ably assisted him. The operating room was half-filled with the hospital internes and other young doctors. They had been such enthusiastic and admiring spectators that they carried the

reports of Dr. Harmon's skill and his "iron nerves," to every one with whom they came in contact. Young as he was, his reputation was well established and he was on the direct path to fame and fortune.

Dr. Getz's ability and success as a child-specialist, had won favor in the sight of old and competent physicians to such an extent that his future was assured. The two young men had opened a suite of offices and their practice increased phenomenally.

Elsa and Leila, finding nothing alluring in the frivolous and evanescent pleasures of the average wealthy society woman, gave much time to brightening the lives of the afflicted. Sometimes one went alone, but oftener together, to visit any institution where there was suffering. With violin and piano, they brought momentary pleasure and happy memories to many whose path in life was troublous. To the worldly question as to what good it did her and Elsa to play for the poor, Leila's reply became proverbial in the family.

"It does us no 'good' in the way you mean," said she, "but neither millions of dollars in money, nor the plaudits of the whole world could give us the joy that we derive from one wan smile on the lips of a suffering man or woman, or from one tiny, pathetic attempt at applause from a child. We cannot forget that our musical gifts are God-given. Years ago, when my sister Elsa was scarcely more than a child, her ambition was to use her precious gift in alleviating the distress of His unfortunate children. I merely assist her in her beautiful mission work."

It was the eve of the Passover festival, and the spacious rooms of the Harmon home were filled with all those who were dear to each other and to the head of the family. Children, children-in-law, grandchildren and friends had assembled to observe the Seder, given partly according to the ritual and partly as Mr. Harmon had arranged it in original simplicity for his children, when they were young. On this particular evening, four little ones had been rendered happy by the unusual privilege of joining the family at dinner. They were the three grandchildren and Richard's boy, little David, who had been invited to come with his parents and the Mortons.

The service was concluded. The old, old story had been told, the ancient sacred hymns were sung, and little Philip had hidden the Matzoth, much to his gratification and to the amusement of the elders. The children had retired, taking little David with them, and the others had gathered in the library, where the comfortable chairs and the softly-glowing lights always created an atmosphere of well-being. The night was cool and the ruddy grate-fire of huge, well-seasoned logs diffused a pleasing warmth, which added to the general comfort.

Mr. Harmon, with a genial glance which included them all, said:

"As we sat around the Seder table tonight, I could not refrain from thinking how much we have for which to be grateful. You, too, Morton, you have as much to be thankful for as I."

"You are mistaken, Harmon. We have more. You

founded your home on faith, divine faith. Your Lares and Penates were and are as sacred to you, as they were to your ancestors ages ago. You have reaped what you sowed in patience, in religious convictions, in harmony and in oneness of purpose. You and your family embody the thought given to the world in 'Paradise Lost'."

"Do you refer to Milton's poem, wherein he speaks of a 'peculiar people'?" asked Doctor Getz.

"Yes, in the last canto, I believe," said Morton. "Do you recall the lines 'and God sought one peculiar people to select from all the rest'?"

"When we read 'Paradise Lost' in High School," interposed Leila, "I remember I puzzled over the meaning of that sentence. The teacher was unable to explain it to my satisfaction and I knew no one whom I could ask."

"I did know some one," said Elsa looking affectionately at her father, "but I completely forgot to ask him. I knew the Jews were called a peculiar people."

"We probably all knew or know that, but who knows why? None of us young folks, I am sure," said Richard.

As his father did not reply, Mr. Harmon said:

"Morton probably knows as well as I, but defers to my grey hair."

"Not exactly," said his friend; "say rather to your experience and broader knowledge. My idea of John Milton's meaning is, that his conception of a 'peculiar people' was derived from a study of the Talmud or

possibly only familiarity with some of its legends."

"Please tell us the legend, father," said Polly earnestly.

"Harmon, tell it to the children. You are the authorized and accredited story-teller of the family."

"The Talmud tells us when God had inscribed the Ten Commandments on the tablets of stone, He sought among the peoples of the earth for one worthy of the sacred trust. He selected a nation to whom He offered the tablets, provided they would obey all the Laws.

"'What are these laws? Tell us one of them,' said their leader.

"'Thou shalt not murder,' was the reply.

"'We cannot obey that law, for we are always at war with our neighbors and war means murder.'

"Then God sought another nation where peace and harmony seemed to prevail, and offered them the tablets on the same terms.

"'Tell us one of the laws. We will judge by it whether we can obey them all.'

"'Thou shalt not steal,' was the rejoinder.

"'Ah, if that is the law, we cannot obey it. We live by cheating and by stealing from one another.'

"Other nations refusing to obey other commandments, God approached Israel with the Divine offer. Quickly Israel answered:

"'We will accept the tablets. We will obey all the laws inscribed thereon.'

"Then said the Lord:

"'You have spoken too rashly. You do not know one of the laws, yet you heedlessly promise to obey

them all. I can place no faith in a promise given without any thought.'

"'We will promise by the memory of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that we will obey your laws.'

"'But the patriarchs are dead,' said the Lord, 'and you will not feel yourselves bound to respect the guarantee.'

"'If we will promise by the lives of our children and their children and all our descendants, will that be a surety?'

"'If your children and theirs and all your descendants will be your guarantee, you are worthy of the gift. Upon Israel will I bestow the priceless possession. Thus will my commandments be obeyed. Thus will they descend to posterity through the children.'

Mr. Harmon ceased speaking and a deep silence ensued, which remained unbroken an appreciable time. Then Mrs. Morton said:

"What a thrilling legend! Polly, do you comprehend now what makes the Jew always a Jew in the bottom of his heart, even if his actions belie, and his words deny his religion?"

"Father," interposed Philip, "that does not really explain Milton's idea, does it?"

"Only to this extent, that he must have been familiar with the tale, as I said before. What I believe he meant by using the word 'peculiar', was to imply 'characteristic' or 'exceptional'. While God was seeking for a people 'to select from all the rest', he found in Israel the 'peculiar' people he sought, a people dif-

ferent from the others, higher in spirituality and in morality. That was undoubtedly Milton's conception."

"I want to learn more about this 'peculiar people' and the customs," said Polly. "In my heart, I am a Jewess today. If a child can have true religious convictions, Polly Hitchcock had them, but they were swept away by the heartlessness of those who were once nearest and dearest. Today Polly Morton has convictions that have made of her a Jewess, staunch and true."

"Polly!" was the one word uttered in varying tones of emotion by them all, and Mrs. Morton's sobs were audible.

In a low, tense voice Polly continued:

"I love your religion, I love your days of memorial, your feast and fast days; and Polly Morton's love for her adopted religion equals that of the Harmons for the faith of their ancestors."

In a voice tremulous with intensity of feeling, Morton said:

"Betty, let us thank God for the fulfillment of our hopes."

David Harmon crossed the room in silence. Standing reverently before the self-avowed little Jewess, he placed his hand in silent benediction upon her head.

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